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THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CATHOLIC PHILOSOPHY IN
THE NOVELS OF EVELYN WAUGH

by

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A THESIS

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The undersigned certify that they have read,
and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for
acceptance a thesis entitled "The Development of a
Catholic Philosophy in the Novels of Evelyn Waugh"
submitted by Daniel Lamont in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

ABSTRACT

The thesis attempts to show that there is an underlying philosophy in the novels of Waugh and that with his greater interest in the Roman Catholic church this takes on a specifically Catholic aspect.

The early novels reveal a chaotic, anarchical world which, albeit fantastical, is a reflection of Waugh's view of his own world. The central figures are "anti-heros" caught up unwillingly in a world devoid of values and with which they are unable to cope. The climax of Waugh's waste land vision is seen in A Handful of Dust. The thesis shows how this world view is developed in Catholic terms to the point in Sword of Honour and The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold where the central character is a Roman Catholic and is very much involved with a Catholic attitude to life. The church is seen in the later novels as a rational instrument of order and harmony. The hero becomes less of a "victim hero", though he is still passive, and the church is not seen as a simple solution of all problems but rather as a source of beneficial tension, as at the end of Brideshead Revisited. The thesis does trace the idea that Waugh saw the failure of liberal humanism in the modern world and that as his work proceeded he demonstrated the superior value of a Catholic

Civilization. The thesis shows that this idea is latent in the early novels, emerges in the image of Gothic architecture in the transitional Handful of Dust, and is fully expressed in the last novels.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	Introduction	1
I	<u>Decline and Fall</u>	8
II	<u>Vile Bodies</u>	26
III	<u>Black Mischief</u>	44
IV	<u>A Handful of Dust</u>	64
V	<u>Brideshead Revisited</u>	83
VI	<u>Sword of Honour</u>	114
VII	Waugh and the Critics	143
	Conclusions	153
	Footnotes	158
	Bibliography	175

INTRODUCTION

Evelyn Waugh was born in 1903 so that his formative years were spent amidst the anarchy of the 1920's. Both in his autobiography, A Little Learning, and other memoirs of the period, we are given a picture of Waugh at Oxford spurning authority and totally indifferent to academic work. When, however, he had worked the anarchy out of his system and had moved out of the sheltered world of public-school and university, Waugh was perturbed by the lack of values manifested by his own generation. The chaotic anarchical world inhabited by the so-called "lost generation" forms the background to the early novels, Decline and Fall and Vile Bodies; Waugh has a waste land vision of a destructive world. Writing for the Evening Standard in 1929, he said:

It is odd that of all the critics of youth . . . not one, so far as I am aware, has pointed out the one fundamental failing of the whole of the younger generation--that is their almost complete lack of any qualitative standards. They spend half their lives learning which side of their bread is buttered when they cannot tell the difference between butter and margarine.¹

The early novels are concerned with the frivolous world of Mayfair, a world which is ruled solely by a craving for pleasure as a means of staving off the boredom everybody fears. Vile Bodies is more sombre than its predecessor,

ending as it does in total war; a world without any line of order must inevitably destroy itself. In his two African novels, Black Mischief and Scoop, Waugh uses Africa as a comment on Western civilization. Europe has abandoned the civilization imposed by a traditional set of beliefs and conventions.

The final expression of Waugh's waste land vision is A Handful of Dust. In the modern chaotic world, the old codes of conduct are inadequate by themselves. Tony Last is a conventionally upright country gentleman who attempts to live by the old rules. His wife cruelly deceives him and yet it is Last who is condemned to an eternal imprisonment in the Brazilian jungle, reading Dickens to a mad settler. One grasps Waugh's feeling here that man is incapable of standing on his own. As he was to point out in a review of a novel by Graham Greene:

The children of Adam are not a race of noble savages who need only a divine spark to perfect them. They are aboriginally corrupt. Their tiny relative advantages of intelligence and taste and good looks and good manners are quite insignificant.²

The world of Waugh's early works is one that moves in a circle, getting nowhere--a frantic effort is made to move forward but in fact nothing is achieved because no-one has any aim. The Luna Park wheel in Decline and Fall and the

mad delirious motor-race of Agatha Runcible in Vile Bodies sum up the world of the early novels. Waugh's bitterness and his premonition of the destruction of European civilization is shown in the introduction to the anthology of his travel books, When the Going was Good. He and his fellows, he points out, had visited remote corners of the world, feeling that Europe could wait for their old age:

We turned our backs on civilization. Had we known, we might have lingered with "Palinurus"; had we known that all that seeming-solid, patiently built, gorgeously ornamented structure of Western life was to melt overnight like an ice-castle, leaving only a puddle of mud; had we known man was even then leaving his post.³

Meanwhile, Waugh has nothing but contempt for the left wing idealism of the 1930's. The "Puritan" poets, as he called them,-- Auden, Spender, Day-Lewis -- "ganged up and captured the decade"⁴, but for Waugh Socialism was no answer. In 1930, he joined the Catholic Church. This was his means of finding a way out of the waste land. Waugh has written two articles about his conversion, one in 1930 and one eighteen years later, in 1948. In the first, "Why it happened to me", he states the basis of his conversion:

It seems to me that in the present phase of European history the essential issue is no longer between Catholicism, on the one side, and Protestantism, on the other, but between Christianity and chaos . . . It is no longer possible, as it was in the time of Gibbon, to accept the benefits of civilization and at the same time deny the supernatural basis upon which it rests.⁵

Christianity is essential to civilization and in his second article Waugh explains why he adopted the Catholic form of Christianity in preference to any other:

England was Catholic for nine hundred years, then Protestant for three hundred, then agnostic for a century. The Catholic structure still lies lightly buried beneath every phase of English life; history, topography, law, archeaology everywhere reveal Catholic origins. Foreign travel anywhere reveals the local temporary character of the heresies and schisms and the Universal, eternal character of the Church. It was self evident to me that no heresy or schism could be right and the Church wrong.⁶

Waugh, believing as he did that the incarnation imposed order⁷, entered the church "on firm intellectual conviction but with little emotion."⁸ He indicates the vital importance of the sense of continuity and the sense of the past: Waugh's attachment to the Roman Catholic church is very largely historically inspired. This explains the enormous emphasis placed on the country house which occurs in all his novels. The country house is a physical, visible symbol of the past which has withstood the pressures of past upheavals and continues in use. The aristocracy who live in such houses have a traditional responsibility to impose some sort of order on a corrupt world. Thus, Waugh is critical of them in the early novels because they have abrogated their duties as order-figures. Tony Last lives according to the old conventions, observing his aristocratic responsibilities, but since he does not

have the strength given by Catholicism, he is destroyed when he meets a crisis. The Catholic Church brings light, rationality and truth to corrupt and perverted man. Everything else is little better than superstition, while the Protestants are erroneous. The clarity and the openness of Western Christianity struck Waugh when he was in Abyssinia. The following passage would perhaps sum his feelings for the Catholic Church:

At Debra Lebanos I suddenly saw the classic basilica and open altar as a great positive achievement, a triumph of light over darkness consciously accomplished, and I saw theology as the science of simplification by which nebulous and elusive ideas are formalized and made intelligible and exact. I saw the Church of the first century as a dark and hidden thing, as dark and hidden as the seed germinating in the womb; legionaries off duty slipping furtively out of barracks, greeting each other by signs and passwords in a locked upper room in the side street of some Mediterranean sea-port; slaves at dawn creeping from the grey twilight into the candle-lit, smoky chapels of the catacombs. The priests hid their office, practising trades; their identity was known only to initiates; they were criminals against the law of their country. And the pure nucleus of truth lay in the minds of the people, encumbered with superstition, gross survivals of the paganism in which they had been brought up; hazy and obscene nonsense seeping through from the other esoteric cults of the Near East, magical infections from the conquered barbarian. And I began to see how these obscure sanctuaries had grown, with the clarity of the Western reason, into the great open altars of Catholic Europe, where the mass is said in a flood of light.⁹

In Helena, Waugh returned to this conflict between early Christianity and the old superstitious paganism.

In the early novels, this Catholic attitude is present only by implication in Waugh's criticism of society

as a waste land in which tradition has been abandoned and replaced by amorality and spurious modernity. On being asked whether he was a satirist, Waugh said that he was not, since satire only "flourishes in a stable period and presupposes homogeneous moral standards." These latter were conspicuously absent in the twentieth century. He regarded his function as an artist was to create a "little system of order of his own."¹⁰ The early novels show the waste land. In Put out More Flags, with its suggestion of a need for penance and self-sacrifice, Waugh approaches the Catholic preoccupation of the later novels.

Waugh's solution to the problem of the waste land emerges in Brideshead Revisited as he presents a world view in Catholic terms where the Church is a rational instrument of order and harmony. After the publication of Brideshead Revisited, he stated that in future he proposed to "represent man more fully, which to me, means only one thing, man in his relation to God."¹¹ This aim is realized in Sword of Honour where Guy Crouchback, who is a member of an old Catholic family, learns the fullness of the Roman Catholic Church and what it means to be a member of it, so that finally after a period of depression he is able to take his place in the world. The pattern of

Waugh's novels can be seen in the progress of his victim heroes. Sean O'Faolain defined what he calls the anti-hero as "groping, puzzled, cross, mocking, frustrated and isolated, manfully or blunderingly trying to establish his own personal, supra-social codes."¹²

This fits Waugh's earlier heroes, but Ryder and Crouchback succeed in establishing their own personal and supra-social code--that of the Roman Catholic Church.

CHAPTER I

DECLINE AND FALL

Waugh's first novel, Decline and Fall, was written in 1928, two years before he joined the Church of Rome. In it he gives a penetrating analysis of the modern world of the 1920's. In fact he examines two worlds -- the bourgeois world of Paul Pennyfeather and the upper-class world of Mayfair. The object of this study is to show how Waugh, in his depiction of the world in Decline and Fall, seeks to present a view of modern life as a waste land, cruel and destructive. Some people, the "dynamic" ones, can exploit the chaos while most, the "static" people, cannot.

In the Prelude to his first novel, Decline and Fall, Waugh presents us with the ordinand, Paul Pennyfeather, who is conventionally hard working and interested in a remote way in the political questions of the time, living a life of routine even to its pleasures -- three ounces of tobacco a week and one and a half pints of beer a day, always drunk at the same time. Looking into the future one can see a Paul Pennyfeather occupying a Prebendal stall, a respected cleric, ministering to the comfortable bourgeoisie.

It is typical that:

Paul had no particular objections to drunkenness -- he had read rather a daring paper to the Thomas More Society on the subject -- but he was consumedly shy of drunkards.¹

Similarly he does not read the stimulating new writers but rather Galsworthy's The Forsyte Saga -- that celebration of solid Edwardian middle-class values. Paul Pennyfeather is an archetypal innocent abroad, preyed on by events, a victim hero.

As a means of castigating the chaotic disorder of the world of 1928, Waugh creates in Decline and Fall a fantasy world which although unreal in itself is a reflection of the unreality and decay of the actual world. The book opens with a "confused roaring and breaking of glass."² The Bollinger Club, appropriately taking its name from that of a Champagne shipper, is meeting over dinner; its celebration takes the form of destruction -- especially of those things connected with art. The members of the Bollinger are all members of landed, aristocratic ruling families and the leaders of the quondam ordered society have become ravening animals:

A shriller note could be heard rising from Sir Alastair's rooms; any who have heard that sound will shrink from it; it is the sound of English county families baying for broken glass.³

The representatives of the scholarly liberal humanism of Oxford are equally incapable of applying a system of sound

values. The dons are rapacious, conscious only of the fact that the more damage done, the more Founder's port the Senior Common Room will have an excuse to drink; to such an extent does this decadence go that Waugh gives us the hilarious irony of Mr. Sniggs, the Junior Dean, saying "Oh, please God, make them attack the chapel"⁴ -- the fines being heavier for that. All this is satiric exaggeration -- excellent foolery, not to be taken too seriously. This is not reality but a world of imagination. Nevertheless, the lunatic world of Decline and Fall is developed out of the perverted world of the twenties. Behind the wit and the absurdity lies a very serious moral.

Despite the fact that the Junior Dean knows quite well that Paul Pennyfeather was stripped by the Bollinger Club, he is sent down for gross indecency. This arbitrary, unjust punishment is his first taste of the hard realities of the world 'out there'; he is caught in an unreal world in which his irrelevant values are of no help and the only protest he can make is to swear meekly. The arbitrary treatment continues. Paul's guardian coolly appropriates his inheritance and suggests he should learn "to see things steady and see them whole."⁵ He is further exploited by Dr. Fagan, headmaster of Llanaba School, who employs him

for a pittance as a schoolmaster.⁶ Pennyfeather is embarked on his voyage as a plaything of fate, a process culminating in the most arbitrary punishment of all when he is imprisoned on Margot Beste-Chetwynd's behalf. It is the lot of the victim to be unable to resist the tide of events and further still to be altogether unaware of what is happening to him. Pennyfeather has been drawn from the backwater that is Oxford into the disordered vortex of action which sweeps him round in a circle to return him to Oxford.

Llanabba Castle is "formidably feudal" but this turns out to be a mere mockery, emblematic of the sham school it houses. The exploitation of the helpless is not new to it. The machicolated wall surrounding the estate was built by unemployed cotton workers in the nineteenth century for their employer who had read the liberal economists and so believed in 'enlightened self-interest.' Thus at one and the same time he helped the out-of-work and "had a great deal of work . . . done very cheaply."⁷ The next section of the book takes place in these surroundings -- Paul being a latter-day version of the cotton worker. He views the common-room "with a sick thrust of apprehension"⁸ and becomes a new exhibit for the pupils. Dr. Fagan, who in his initial interview

talked impressively of "tone" and "vision" rather than more solid academic accomplishments, exploits Paul, overloading him with duties. Fagan is one of those happy in the 'lunatic world' since he is able to use its potentiality to his own success. His advice to Paul -- "We schoolmasters must temper discretion with deceit"⁹ -- indicates a realistic, if corrupt, scale of values. Fagan is able to manage the world in which he lives so that he always emerges on top after every set-back. The modern wasteland is a world where the charlatan and the poseur succeed while the liberal humanist does not. Waugh has nevertheless a sneaking admiration for the "happy exploiters."

Paul Pennyfeather starts out as a schoolmaster in a situation where his pupil, Peter Beste-Chetwynd, has rather more self-possession than his master. Peter is at home in the lunatic world but his self-confidence is nothing to that of Captain Grimes. The latter is what might be called a failed gentleman, none too keen on washing, who was expelled from his public-school but survives by ruthlessly exploiting the public-school code. Grimes is an elemental figure. No matter how often 'he lands in the soup,' he always emerges unscathed. Grimes has no respect for the conventions -- to him such an idea as committing suicide to avoid the shame of a court martial

on a regiment is merely laughable. As the book continues we see more and more that Grimes is a 'life-force' who has the knack of survival, or, as he puts it: "I should think I've been put on my feet more often than any living man."¹⁰ The portrayal of Grimes is humorous but as with Fagan there is a respect for a man who can exploit 'the lunatic world.'

Grimes has no illusions about harsh realities but is an incurable optimist. Mr. Prendergast is equally aware of them but is unable to overcome them. His situation is typified in his feeling that he cannot have a bath before breakfast as well as Paul. "It's all part of the same thing"¹¹, he says. He is unable to understand why God made the world at all and suggests, therefore, that there is no such thing as a Divine order. This basic doubt has driven him from his benefice and must inevitably contrast with the happy acceptance of other people; he cannot, like his Bishop, dismiss it as being a matter of no importance, nor can he, like Grimes, face the world with a cheerful optimism. Prendergast is a singularly ineffectual creature, unable to fit himself into the world or even to maintain discipline in a class-room. His only comfort is his innumerable pipes -- a strange replacement for the consolations of religion. Prendergast is another

dim figure who is a victim of the cruelty of the modern world. His reaction to Paul's invitation to dinner is typical:

'Really, Pennyfeather,' he said, 'I think that's uncommonly kind of you. I hardly know what to say. Of course, I should love it. I can't remember when I dined at an hotel last. Certainly not since the War. It will be a treat. My dear boy, I'm quite overcome.'

And, much to Paul's embarrassment, a tear welled up in each of Mr. Prendergast's eyes, and coursed down his cheeks.¹²

Pennyfeather's earnest attitude undergoes considerable modification as he adopts a 'peace at any price' attitude in his teaching. This relaxation of rigidity is put to the test when he finds himself in a dilemma as to whether or not he should accept Trumpington's reparation of twenty pounds for having caused him to be sent down from Oxford. Waugh here states explicitly the tension caused by the conflict of the old solid honourable ideals with the new anarchy; the old values of an honour which are ingrained in Paul by his upbringing are confronted by the more realistic values of the new:

There is every reason why I should take this money. Digby-Vaine-Trumpington is exceedingly rich; and if he keeps it, it will undoubtedly be spent on betting or some deplorable debauch. Owing to his party I have suffered irreparable harm. My whole future is shattered, and I have directly lost one hundred and twenty pounds a year in scholarship and two hundred and fifty pounds a year allowance from my guardian. By any process of thought the money is mine. But . . . there is my honour. For generations the British bourgeoisie have spoken of themselves as gentlemen, and by that they have meant, among other things, a self-respecting scorn of irregular perquisites. It is the quality that distinguishes a gentleman from both the artist and the aristocrat. Now I am a gentleman. I can't help it: it's born in me. I just can't take that money.¹³

Grimes, however, fearing Paul would refuse, cables an acceptance and the latter "in spite of himself . . . felt a great wave of satisfaction surge up within him."¹⁴ Paul cannot act like Grimes but an unwilling admiration is forced from him for Grimes' capacity to make use of what life turns up.

As Grimes is what has been called a life-force, so is Philbrick. As a butler, he is obviously out of place and to each of Pennyfeather, Grimes and Prendergast, he gives a different explanation of his presence at Llanabba. Philbrick appears in the most unexpected places and always with an air of self-possession -- Mayfair, prison and, finally, driving a Rolls-Royce in Oxford. He is a startling contrast to the dim pedestrian figure of Pennyfeather. Clearly Philbrick is not going to be the victim of misfortune for long. Even when in prison he finds himself a comfortable niche as reception bath cleaner where "he still bore an indefinable air of the grand manner."¹⁵ One wonders whether there is not an element of madness in Philbrick -- he certainly manifests an inspired lunacy. Unlike Pennyfeather, he is one more happy exploiter, knowing very well how to manipulate the world he lives in.

The first section of the novel ends with the departure of Grimes. Grimes, 'in the soup again',

decides to marry Flossie, Dr. Fagan's elder daughter. He is as opposed to the match as is his prospective father-in-law. To Grimes, marriage is a form of bondage; in a splendidly rhetorical speech he cries in agony:

O, why did nobody warn me? . . . I should have been told. They should have told me in so many words. They should have warned me about Flossie, not about the fires of hell. I've risked them, and I don't mind risking them again but they should have told me about marriage. . . . I should have been warned of the great lavender scented bed that was being laid out for me; of the wisteria at the windows, of all the intimacy and confidence of family life.¹⁶

The bourgeois ideal of marriage with all its restraints is only going to destroy Grimes. He has none of the social graces and feels repressed in the close company of Dr. Fagan. Ironically, he is offered the ideal job by a brewery as a taster of beer, but too late. Grimes finds a means of escaping: his clothes are found by the sea shore with the appropriately cryptic note: "THOSE THAT LIVE BY THE FLESH SHALL PERISH BY THE FLESH."¹⁷ But, as we well know, he is not dead.

At the chaotic school sports, Paul falls in love with Margot Beste-Chetwynd who employs him as a tutor for her son, Peter, and thus takes him out of the juvenile world of Llanabba and into the more sophisticated world of Mayfar. Part Two of Decline and Fall opens with a description of Margot Beste-Chetwynd's country-house,

King's Thursday. One may well take the fate of this house as symbolic of the whole book -- the destruction of the old order and its replacement by the new chaos. The original house was built in the sixteenth century and was passed down from father to son until the last Lord Pastmaster sold it to his sister-in-law. The house and the people who served it remained quite untouched by altering times so that the continuity was uninterrupted. All this is quite irreconcilable with the modern age. The new order in the shape of Margot Beste-Chetwynd tears down the old house and replaces it by "something clean and square."¹⁸ Waugh does not seem over-concerned about the destruction of King's Thursday; he is certainly sharply satirical of the attempts to save it. Houses play an important part in Waugh's novels. They symbolize a sense of order and permanence and later come to stand for the city of God. In the same way that King's Thursday has become redundant, so has the aristocracy, the traditional upholders of order, abandoned its responsibilities. The new King's Thursday is no better than the old. Otto Silenus, the Bauhaus trained avant garde architect, gives his views on man with an almost Swiftian hatred and seeks to adopt Le Corbusier's dictum: "La maison est une machine à habiter." He wants to

dehumanize architecture since, in his opinion, "all ill comes from man."¹⁹ Neither old nor new are capable of creating order. The two King's Thursdays symbolize the waste-land and the attitude of mind which can only create chaos and a spiritual desert.

After a brief contact with his Oxford world through his old friend Arthur Potts, Pennyfeather takes up life at King's Thursday as tutor to Peter. By now, he is completely in love with Margot Beste-Chetwynd and he certainly fills Peter's ideal of a stepfather -- "someone young and quiet."²⁰ The Mayfair life breaks in with the arrival on the scene of the wild pleasure-loving youth who form the world of Vile Bodies. In these surroundings and in this company the figure of the politician Maltravers is incongruous. He is one of the new men with ability and push who have fought their way up from the bottom and bode fair to replace the old aristocracy who, from what we see here, are corrupt and decadent. Significantly, he is the only one to secure the approval of Otto Silenus. Throughout this house-party, Margot Beste-Chetwynd has been lying in a drugged coma, something we accept quite normally as being in tune with the tone of the book. Pennyfeather accepts it also. He proposes to Margot, who gives a qualified acceptance -- she must make

sure first. "But happily there was no mistake and next day Paul and Margot announced their engagement."²¹ Paul is being absorbed into a new world and a certain evidence of change is seen. He accepts as normal things which a year before would have horrified him.

In the chapter entitled "Resurrection", Grimes re-appears-- one could never quite believe he was dead. He is still pursued by the police but nevertheless "Grimes has fallen on his feet again."²² There is always someone who will put Grimes onto a good thing; he has entered Margot Beste-Chetwynd's Latin-American Entertainments, a chain of brothels, in a managerial capacity. The figure from Paul's remoter past, Arthur Potts, now working for the League of Nations, also re-appears. Significantly, as though to preserve Paul's innocence, neither Grimes nor Potts are prepared to reveal the exact nature of their occupations. Their re-appearance and their contrasting personalities are ironic for both will be involved in Pennyfeather's downfall. The chapter ends on an appropriate note of foreboding -- the foretelling of the second re-building of King's Thursday. As a business woman Margot is everything that Paul is not; she has the necessary self possession and drive and although he watches her hire girls for her Latin-American brothels, Paul is

totally unaware of what is happening. He is the proverbial innocent abroad for, like Candide, he perceives nothing. Callously, he is sent to Marseilles to sort out a number of problems connected with the girls. Even the negotiations involved and the unsalubrious quarter of the town he visits, fail to inform him of the nature of Margot's business. Paul is totally unprepared for the vicious amoral world in which he now moves. Worldly wisdom is a quality in which Pennyfeather is conspicuously lacking and it is quite in keeping that he derives his knowledge of the world from the life of classical antiquity and not from the reality around him. Paul may feel a man of the world but he quite plainly is not one. He returns to the elegance of Mayfair only to be arrested on his wedding morning as a scapegoat for his fiancée. She has been well aware of the risk Paul has run and is right to have a premonition of disaster. The toast to "Fortune a much maligned lady"²³ is startlingly ironic in context.

With the judge's condemnation of himself as a "human vampire"²⁴ and a quite unwarranted praise of Margot ringing in his ears, Paul Pennyfeather goes down to his sentence of seven years penal servitude. One feels the inadequacy of Peter Beste-Chetwynd's apologies: "You can't imagine Mamma in prison, can you?"²⁵ Paul, ironically

enough, finds prison life enjoyable. "The loss of his personal possessions gave him a curiously agreeable sense of irresponsibility."²⁶ He enjoys the freedom from the need to make decisions of any kind. The ideal world for Pennyfeather is thus a restricted one where the need to act is limited. As he puts it: "Anyone who has been to an English public school will always feel comparatively at home in prison."²⁷ He enjoys his isolation but he is torn by the same dilemma which troubled him when Trumpington offered him reparation. Margot is guilty of the crime for which he is being punished and for which by rights she ought to accept the blame, but none the less he does see the impossibility of her imprisonment. He regards Peter's excuse for his mother as "a statement of a natural law."²⁸ Paul, unlike say, Grimes, accepts his role as victim; he is resigned to making the sacrifice, being content to be a person who is acted upon rather than acting himself. Moreover, Margot is able to alleviate his lot and finally, by marrying Maltravers secures his release by means of a fake death.

Prendergast and Grimes re-appear. The three schoolmasters are reunited in prison. Grimes unlike Paul cannot stand the restraint and repression and makes a run for freedom. He is given up for dead but like Paul we cannot

believe he actually is dead:

Grimes, Paul at last realized, was of the immortals. He was a life force. Sentenced to death in Flanders, he popped up in Wales; drowned in Wales, he emerged in South America; engulfed in the dark mystery of Egdon mire he would rise again somewhere at some time, shaking from his limbs the integuments of the tomb.²⁹

Grimes and Philbrick are equipped to make use of the world, to exploit its advantages fully. They will always survive. Prendergast, by contrast, is totally unable to cope with the lunatic world. The cruelty of that world is admirably seen in the treatment of Lord Tangent's death earlier on at Llanabba. He is accidentally wounded in the foot at the school sports. From quite casual hints dropped in passing conversation we hear of the progress of a trivial wound through amputation to death.³⁰ The tone is flippant and heartless and this heightens the pointless cruelty of it. Prendergast is similarly a victim of the harshness of the lunatic world -- his head is sawn off by a madman whom he visits in the course of his new duties as a Prison Chaplain -- but his death is not taken seriously. The values of the waste-land do not allow for the maintaining of a sense of proportion or compassion.

Meanwhile Waugh directs some very powerful satire at Sir Wilfred Lucas-Dockery the prison governor. He points out the absurdity of his pseudo-scientific claptrap which

suggests "almost all crime is due to the repressed desire for aesthetic expression."³¹ Lucas-Dockery refuses to be concerned with more serious matters such as a man working in the kitchen with an infectious skin disease. In his amateurish attempts to practise psycho-therapy he places in the hands of a homicidal maniac the carpenter's tools with which Prendergast is brutally murdered. Waugh is very scathing about selfish crank reformers throughout his work. Lucas-Dockery is the first of a series of left wing reformers who are shown to have a lack of common sense and who create more disorder. The theme reaches its climax in Love Among the Ruins which shows the overall effect on a whole country of such people.

Pennyfeather is resurrected by means of a fake death arranged by Margot Beste-Chetwynd and Dr. Fagan who is now running a nursing home. Paul leaves for Corfu where he discovers he has fallen out of love with Margot and is happy to come full circle back to Oxford, living the same 'dim' life as before. While on Corfu, Paul meets the architect, Otto Silenus who presents a philosophy in terms of a Luna Park wheel:

'You pay five francs and go into a room with tiers of seats all round, and in the centre the floor is made of a great disc of polished wood that revolves quickly. At first you sit down and watch the others. They are all trying to sit in the wheel, and they keep getting flung off, and that makes them laugh, and you laugh too, It's great fun.'

'I don't think that sounds very much like life,' said Paul rather sadly.

'Oh, but it is though. You see the nearer you can get to the hub of the wheel the slower it is moving and the easier it is to stay on. There is generally someone in the centre who stands up and does a sort of dance . . . Of course at the very centre there is a point completely at rest, if only one could find it. I'm not sure I am not very near that point myself . . . Lots of people just enjoy scrambling on and being whisked off and scrambling on again. How they all shriek and giggle! Then there are others like Margot, who sit as far out as they can and hold on for dear life and enjoy that. But the whole point is that you needn't get on it at all if you don't want to. People get hold of ideas about life, and that makes them think they've got to join in the game, even if they don't enjoy it. It doesn't suit everyone.'³²

Thus Silenus divides the world into those who are "static" and those who are "dynamic". He perceives Paul is suited to the prison life, that basically he is a "static" person. When he returns to Oxford, he is substantially unchanged though he has become harder. For example, he approves whole-heartedly of the condemnation of certain early heretics and he is much harsher to Peter Beste-Chetwynd than before -- "I didn't think there was much to be gained from our knowing each other."³³

Waugh presents his waste-land theme through the medium of Paul Pennyfeather in terms of his reactions to

the world into which he is plunged and to its inhabitants. Paul is the innocent idealistic victim of intensifying outrage, swindled and exploited at every turn. Events force themselves on him and totally direct his actions, rendering his set of values useless. Paul is modern man in the modern world. Waugh indicates that the old symbols of order -- King's Thursday and the aristocracy -- are no longer operative. Decline and Fall is part of Waugh's waste land vision of a disordered unreal world. The novel was written before his conversion to Catholicism but there is a foreshadowing of the later religious preoccupation in his two figures, Prendergast and Pennyfeather, who, despite their close connection with the Anglican church, have no equipment to handle the modern world. It is suggested that the only way out of the impasse is to renounce the modern world altogether, that is to say, not to get on the Luna Park wheel at all. This is perhaps an anticipation of Waugh's later Catholic philosophy which sees the modern world as hostile and where the past fails to act as a steadying influence: that must come from an external source. The next novel, Vile Bodies, continues the theme of wild disorder and chaos but presents it through a protagonist, Adam Symes, who, while equally a victim, is less innocent and infinitely more percipient than Paul.

CHAPTER II

VILE BODIES

Adam Symes, successor to Paul Pennyfeather, enters Vile Bodies, in company with all the main figures in the book, on board a channel steamer. The same arbitrary injustice which sent Pennyfeather down from Oxford causes the Customs Officer at Dover to destroy Adam's autobiography (on which his immediate prospects depend) as being obscene. We are back in the lunatic world of Decline and Fall. His publisher, Sam Benfleet, cheerfully exploits Adam by making him sign an impossible contract which shackles him to the firm for a virtually non-existent return on his next twelve books, quite without regard to the circumstances; and the whole is done with an air of bonhomie and good cheer. The scene is strongly reminiscent of Pennyfeather's initial interview with Dr. Fagan. At his hotel, Shephard's in Dover Street, Adam wins a thousand pounds and promptly puts it on a rank outsider at the instigation of an unknown and very drunk major. This sort of impulsive naiveté is typical of him.

Adam is engaged to Nina Blount but he never has sufficient money to marry her. When he rings her up to tell her that they cannot get married because he has gambled all his money, it is merely the first of many such postponements. Permanence and order seem to be Adam's objectives but he is never to achieve them. Much of Adam's dealings with Nina take place on the telephone.¹ Their conversations reveal a brittle sophistication where little or no feeling is expressed; indeed to do so would be bad form:

' . . . Darling. I am glad about our getting married.'
' So am I. But don't lets get intense about it.'²

Having lost his thousand pounds, Adam is dispatched to borrow another thousand from her father, Colonel Blount. The latter, as Waugh himself says,³ is a figure from conventional farce, a confused old gentleman, verging on the borders of senility, with a passion for the cinema. He assumes that Adam is an amiable madman and gives him a cheque for a thousand pounds, but signs it "Charlie Chaplin". Adam is not only the victim of commercial sharp-practice but lunacy as well. On the strength of his money, for Nina does not have the heart to point out that the cheque is a dud, he sets out to seduce her. The pair's sophistication makes the affair seem almost everyday but it is a joyless seduction. The food at the

hotel they go to is as dreary as only bad English hotel food can be. Nina derives no joy from going to bed with Adam, while both lose their principal charm -- their innocence. In fact their sophistication is only 'would-be' and breaks down at this point. Adam is less ineffectual and far more sophisticated than Pennyfeather but he is still a naif. His worldliness and that of Nina is only superficial. The depression of the seduction is completed by Adam's discovery that Colonel Blount's cheque is worthless. So that once again his hopes of settling down and of happiness retreat. Yet he continues to be hopeful, not entirely without justification.

Symes gets a job as Mr. Chatterbox, the gossip-columnist of The Daily Excess. Since his predecessor printed libellous comments, all the real notables of the fashionable world have been blacklisted. Adam's ability as a writer is given full scope as he either has to invent stories about backwoods peers or, better still, invent interesting people. This he does with immense success. In fact, Adam has turned exploiter. Knowing full well that the public is not concerned with truth or fact but merely wishes to be entertained, his fund of imagination and inside knowledge of the fashionable world enables him to make his column one of the most popular. For once Adam is on top. Unfortunately he loses his job. Paying

another visit to Colonel Blount, he leaves Nina to write his column but she mentions forbidden subjects and people. Adam is not destined to be successful for long. Marriage on which both of them are keen, remains an impossibility.

Adam, Agatha Runcible and Miles Malpractice (who has succeeded to the gossip-column) go down to the country to watch a motor race. While driving to the car-park, Adam again meets his quarry, the drunk major, but inevitably and irresistibly the two lanes of traffic diverge before they can exchange names and addresses. However, they do briefly meet later, long enough for Adam to discover he has won thirty-five thousand pounds but, when he tries to collect, the major is too drunk to recognize him. Like Paul Pennyfeather in this respect, he is unable to establish himself properly in the lunatic world. Not only does he never have enough money but he loses Nina as well.

The latter, understandably tired of waiting, marries a wealthy childhood friend whom she does not love. Her fiancé, Ginger Littlejohn, senses this. In a deal with Adam, precipitated by the receipt of his hotel bill, Littlejohn gives him seventy-eight pounds to avoid Nina's company. This action shows the other side of Symes, more in touch with Grimes and Seal, the exploiting hero of Black

Mischief, where he exploits the lunacy of the world. He is caught up in it and has to make the best of what he finds. Nina's marriage is valueless and loveless. Her honeymoon is disastrous -- "too spirit-crushing".⁴ When, therefore, Littlejohn is called to rejoin his regiment, it seems entirely appropriate that Adam in the role of happy exploiter should take his place as husband and spend Christmas with Nina's father who fails to recognize him.

Adam Symes is a transitional character between Paul Pennyfeather and Basil Seal; in the early part of the book he is innocent, but he acquires a toughness and adapts himself to the world. None the less, he has doubts and is well aware that something is wrong with the world in which he moves:

' . . . Nina, do you ever feel that things simply can't go on much longer? '

'What d'you mean by things -- us or everything? '

'Everything. '

'No -- I wish I did.'⁵

Symbolically, the last we see of Adam is in battle -- "the biggest battlefield in the history of the world." It is the logical end to the lunacy and the answer to Adam's question. He meets his drunk major, now a general, but his thirty-five thousand pounds will now buy only a couple of drinks and a newspaper.

In Vile Bodies, Waugh portrays a lunatic world, a picture of disintegrating society, and it is this world to which Adam Symes belongs. We are plunged into this world at the very start, since on board the channel steamer we meet the representatives of decadence -- Lady Throbbing and Mrs. Blackwater, the slightly senile representatives of the old order; Agatha Runcible and Miles Malpractice, the decadent and amoral descendants of the old aristocracy; Mr. Outrage, last week's Prime Minister, who passes his voyage in a drugged coma -- in addition to Adam himself.

Aboard the boat-train, the gilded youth discuss their social life -- which appears to be one continuous party. Waugh, however, reveals the corruption of the aristocracy, the formal symbols of order, not only in the younger generation, but also in their elders. For example, Lady Throbbing's husband -- like Mr. Outrage -- took drugs. In fact this whole family is particularly decadent. A daughter has served her time in one of Lady Metroland's (Margot Beste-Chetwynd) South American brothels; the younger son, Miles Malpractice, is, as his name suggests, perverted. The traditional agents of order and permanence, the well-established upper class, have declined to the amoral idiocies of an Agatha Runcible.

The eternal party provides the new sensation for the bored aristocratic youth. Mrs. Ape is such a new attraction, a palliative for boredom. Margot Metroland's party is bound to be a success since it combines the well-tried mixture of food and drink and a novelty. One of the features of the lunatic world is that its inhabitants are in constant need of new stimulation, of a relief from ennui. Nina, for example, is bored with Adam and with life; her interest, however, is aroused by the fictitious story of Colonel Strapper horsewhipping someone. This attitude is reflected in her view of love: it is purely sexual -- but this gives her a pain. The deeper, less superficial aspect is unknown to her -- though Adam seems to have inklings of it. Their relationship merely supplies her with the need of the moment.

It seems that the decadent aristocracy are only preoccupied with the matter of the immediate present, the perpetual party:

. . . Masked parties, Savage parties, Victorian parties, Greek parties, Wild West parties, Russian parties, Circus parties, parties where one had to dress as somebody else, almost naked parties in St. John's Wood, parties in flats and studios and houses and ships and hotels and night clubs, in windmills and swimming baths, tea parties at school where one ate muffins and meringues and tinned crab, parties at Oxford where one drank brown sherry and smoked Turkish cigarettes, dull dances in London and comic dances in Scotland and disgusting dances in Paris -- all that succession and repetition of massed humanity . . . Those vile bodies . . . 6

The new world is one where only the exploiters of the chaos and anarchy will succeed, but there are survivals from an earlier and more relaxed age though in all probability they are doomed. Adam takes up his quarters in Shepheard's Hotel. Lottie Crump, its owner, has contrived to maintain the atmosphere of an hotel "true to the sound old snobbery of pound sterling and strawberry leaves" where one can go "parched with modernity any day, if Lottie likes one's face, and still draw up, cool and uncontaminated, great healing draughts from the well of Edwardian certainty."⁷ The hotel, itself, remains unmoved by changing society but it shelters the symbols of disorder -- an ex-king of Ruritania, ousted by liberals, and Mr. Outrage, the Prime Minister, trying unsuccessfully to seduce the wife of a Japanese diplomat. In fact, it reflects an escape from the pressures of life.

Anchorage House, the town house of a great magnate, is another such 'doomed survival'; it is a relic of Edwardian Society and a glorious past. The older generation are decaying -- Colonel Blount is senile -- and they are also less than honest. Adam declares that marriage should be permanent⁸ but Metroland can sit in smug complacency knowing full well his wife is in bed upstairs with Trumpington. It is these people, the older generation, who quite cruelly marry Ursula Stayle to Edward Throbbing,

regardless of her dislike of the idea. So far as marriage is concerned the 'lost' generation is more honest than their parents. Although many of those at the Anchorage House party are people "of decent and temperate life",⁹ its world is doomed because it is dishonest and corrupt. The party seems a macabre Dance of Death.

Waugh devotes a large part of the book to criticizing and exposing the activities of the press. It is shown as one of the main corrupting forces, part of the modernism of which he is so suspicious since it has caused the general decadence:

At Archie Schwert's party the fifteenth Marquess of Vanbrugh, Earl Vanbrugh de Brendon, Baron Brendon, Lord of the Five Isles and Hereditary Grand Falconer to the Kingdom of Connaught, said to the Eighth Earl of Balcairn, Viscount Erdinge, Baron Cairn of Balcairn, Red Knight of Lancaster, Count of the Holy Roman Empire and Chenonceau Herald of Aquitaine, 'Hullo,' he said. 'Isn't this a repulsive party? What are you going to say about it?' for they were both of them as it happened, gossip writers for the daily papers.¹⁰

These descendants of the families who supplied the great offices of church and state, the upholders of ancient chivalry, are reduced to social butterflies, feeding on the entertainments of their fellow aristocrats and exposing with nauseating glee the skeletons in everybody's cupboard. The preoccupation with social life and the complete abandonment of conventional values is total -- witness Vanbrugh's making capital out of Miss Jane Brown, the Prime

Minister's daughter, inviting people, himself included, back to Downing Street after a party. Even the normally shameless Agatha Runcible is put out of countenance by this. The influence of the press is shown as only harmful.

The sensationalism of the press satisfies a craving for excitement in its readership and this is the source of its power. Waugh gives us a revelation of the mechanics of the gossip-column, and those who figure in it are unreal distortions. For example, Agatha Runcible, to the reader, is a somewhat vicious good-time girl; to the reader of the gossip column, however, she is a girl with "such a good sweet face."¹¹ Waugh also intends to reveal how the papers tamper with the truth, and invent a great deal of their content. Balcairn, having gone disguised to Margot Metroland's party, is unmasked and ejected. To make way for the outrageous fictional account of the party which he phones in the sub-editors suppress important political announcements, garble evidence at a murder trial. The final irony of this episode is that the newspaper's proprietor is impressed by Balcairn's disguise -- "That's peppy"¹² -- and plans to raise his salary. Too late; the latter has committed suicide, a victim of the lunatic world.

Adam, who succeeds him, similarly creates a fiction which is believed. The sculptor, Provna, for example, only exists in Adam's imagination but "such is the power of the press, that soon after this a steady output of Provnas began to travel from Warsaw to Bond Street and from Bond Street to California."¹³ Adam has grasped that the readers of a gossip column do not want truth but only the pleasure of being inquisitive. Underneath his vision of a fantastic world, Waugh seems to be emphasizing the need for reality and truth.

The motor race is also part of the lunacy of Adam's world. Agatha Runcible, very drunk, takes over the wheel of a racing car and while driving at great speed leaves the race-track and crashes into a village market-cross. With splendid callousness, Adam and his friends delay looking for her until they have eaten. Consideration for the other is not conspicuous in the would-be sophisticated world of Vile Bodies. All the characters of the book are pursuing some sort of goal -- marriage, happiness -- and the race is symbolic of this. Agatha, under the influence of the drink in which this book is awash, destroys herself. In a state of shock after her accident, she makes her way to London. Her end is hastened by her friends who with cruel selfishness hold a cocktail party round her bed, while Miles Malpractice

writes his column about it. Adam is the only one who goes to the funeral. As in Decline and Fall, there is a total disregard for death. The whole novel shows an indifference to personal relationships -- Agatha is deserted by her friends when she needs them, Nina marries a man she does not love.

The novel ends with the war which is the logical outcome of the lunatic world. The decaying and senile old order is self-destructive. The moral and spiritual desolation achieves a physical parallel in the "great expanse of mud in which every visible object was burnt or broken."¹⁴ The epigraph to the novel is a quotation from Lewis Carroll's Alice Through the Looking Glass where Alice has to run all the time in order to stay in the same place and her tears are unreal. This sums up the whole novel and recalls the symbol of the Luna Park wheel in Decline and Fall. Paul, it will be remembered, was judged to be a bystander but Adam has joined the lunatic world and advanced a little onto the wheel. The whole world from politics to the press is failing to run sufficiently fast to keep in the same place; it runs down. To convey this, Waugh uses a film technique which flickers and dances to and fro. The jerky chaotic motion of the lives of the characters is conveyed by flashing from one vignette to another. One minute we hear Nina announcing she is bored, the next we

meet Benfleet, the exploiting publisher.

Although Vile Bodies was written before Waugh was received into the Catholic church, there is an unmistakable religious implication in the book. He has revealed a chaotic and anarchical world; no way out is suggested but it is the Jesuit Father Rothschild who explains and interprets. The religious note is sounded at the very beginning aboard the channel steamer where all the passengers are feeling the miseries of sea-sickness. Rothschild reacts within the specific framework of his faith:

To Father Rothschild no passage was worse than any other. He thought of the sufferings of the saints, the mutability of human nature, the Four Last Things, and between whiles repeated snatches of the penitential psalms.¹⁵

By contrast when spirits are at their lowest in the Smoking Room, people are revived by singing Mrs. Ape's hymn, "There ain't no flies on the Lamb of God." There is no doubting at least the superficial effect of religion. Even Mrs. Hoop is persuaded to abandon theosophy^h and "give the Catholics the once over."¹⁶

Mrs. Ape's revivalist hot-gospelling is ruthlessly revealed as an emotional superficiality. Her angels are all too human and the ironically named Chastity eventually goes off to join one of Margot Metroland's chain of South American brothels. Perhaps this is no worse than her

remaining with Mrs. Ape whom Lady Throbbing describes as having a "coarse face" and looking like a procureuse.¹⁷

At the party held for her by Lady Metroland, Mrs. Ape asks her audience to look at themselves and almost induces a hypnotic state in them. But her religion is of an emotional and sentimental kind. It is the nonsense Lady Circumference who brings back the reality:

But suddenly on that silence vibrant with self-accusation broke the organ-voice of England, the hunting-cry of the ancien régime. Lady Circumference gave a resounding snort of disapproval:

'What a damned impudent woman,' she said. Adam and Nina and Miss Runcible began to giggle, and Margot Metroland for the first time in her many parties was glad to realize that the guest of the evening was going to be a failure. It had been an awkward moment.¹⁸

Mrs. Ape is a stage performer and the appeal of her religion is akin to the appeal of a popular star. Her Christianity is a 'fashionable piety' and the comfort it offers is that of emotional self-indulgence. Typically Agatha Runcible thinks of her make-up, not her soul. Mrs. Ape's revivalism does not strike any deeper than the most superficial level and therefore it must be discarded. From this point she disappears from the novel. (On a lower social level, the film being made of Wesley's life, is a similar attempt to appeal to the public by titillating their taste for sensation under the guise of being concerned for their spiritual welfare.)

Father Rothschild is a curious figure. His role seems akin to that of Otto Silenus in Decline and Fall, a commentator, a provider of insights. In the introduction to the revised edition, Waugh admits that he had never met a Jesuit at this point in his life. The figure he creates is the image of one involved in political manipulation, an activity of which he seems keen to acquit the Society of Jesus in his Edmund Campion. At the Anchorage House party in a very revealing speech Rothschild sums up the situation:

Don't you think that perhaps it is all in some way historical? . . . I don't think people ever want to lose their faith either in religion or anything else. I know very few young people, but it seems to me that they are all possessed of a fatal hunger for permanence. I think all these divorces show that. People aren't content to just muddle along nowadays. And this word "bogus" they all use . . . They won't make the best of a bad job nowadays. My private schoolmaster used to say, "If a thing's worth doing at all, it's worth doing well." My church has taught that in different words for several centuries. But these young people have got hold of another end of the same stick and for all we know it might be the right one. They say "If a thing's not worth doing well, it's not worth doing at all." It makes everything very difficult for them.¹⁹

Rothschild has seen a "radical instability"²⁰ in the world. The personages in the novel are pursuing some sort of stability. Adam's wish to get married is an example of the craving for permanence. Rothschild expresses the need for a faith, for a secure way of life, making explicit the waste-land theme of Waugh's early novels.

There was, as Mr. Outrage puts it, a civilization to be saved and remade after the First World War, but as Rothschild is aware, the younger generation has dismissed it as bogus and corrupt; Outrage does not see that civilization as he sees it may not be worth saving. The tragedy is that no replacement for the old has been found.

The fantastic world of Vile Bodies is not as complete or unreal as that of Decline and Fall. From the middle of the book a more sombre note is sounded,²¹ and much of the gaiety goes. The humour of Colonel Blount becomes less amiable. The artless prattle of Agatha Runcible which was earlier lighthearted has now become expressive of a futility, a pointlessness. By the end of the book, the modernism which has been the object of Waugh's satire, is shown to be completely corrupting and destructive -- the cinema corrupts Colonel Blount, the race track destroys Agatha. The parties all culminate in the war of the closing pages with the "Huxdane-Halley bomb (for the dissemination of leprosy germs)" in Adam's hand.²²

Vile Bodies depicts a world which is totally devoid of any meaning or value whatsoever. Colonel Blount's film "whenever the story reached a point of dramatic and significant action seemed to get faster and faster."²³ The same is true of the action of the novel. There is no

semblance of plot as in Decline and Fall, merely a series of disjointed incidents. If the world is disordered, people like Adam Symes are at least searching for some system of values by which to live. As Father Rothschild puts it, the younger generation are not content to muddle through. It is a muddling through which leads to the holocaust with which the book closes. Adam Symes' fruitless attempts to marry Nina signify a desire to escape from the trivial life he leads, to find a more permanent state. It will be remembered that he felt marriage was to be a long lasting affair, even though he did commit fornication himself. The aristocratic world of Vile Bodies is one where civilization has gone stale and the aristocrats, the upholders of an ordered society, are decadent. The pattern of life of this novel is summed up by Agatha Runcible's recollection of her delirium:

I thought we were all driving round and round in a motor race and none of us could stop, and there was an enormous audience composed entirely of gossip writers and gate-crashers and Archie Schwert and people like that, all shouting to us at once to go faster, and car after car kept crashing until I was left all alone driving, driving -- and then I used to crash and wake up.²⁴

The cynical bored world of Vile Bodies moves only in a circular fashion with no aim in mind. The war of the closing pages is the inevitable final destruction. The ordered structure of the aristocracy has turned into disorder. The only person with any sense of purpose and

stability is Father Rothschild. He has a percipience and the assurance of at least a framework of harmony in his church, thereby foreshadowing the specifically Catholic world of the later novels.

Adam Symes is a development from Paul Pennyfeather -- he is less of a 'Candide' figure and victim hero. He is still naive, certainly, still exploited but he is less innocent and is very much a part of the world in which he moves. He now sits on the very edge of the Luna Park wheel, but he is not a bystander. To a certain extent he queries the world in which he lives. There is a certain detachment. Adam Symes paves the way for Basil Seal, the hero of Black Mischief, who is a manipulator, not a victim-hero.

CHAPTER III

BLACK MISCHIEF

Evelyn Waugh spent 1930 and 1931 travelling on the African continent. In the first place he went to Abyssinia for the coronation of the Emperor Haile Selassie and thereafter to Zanzibar where he stayed for some time. The initial product of this trip was a travel book -- Remote People, published in 1931. The following year Waugh published his novel, Black Mischief, which draws very heavily on his experiences of Abyssinia and Zanzibar. Azania would seem to be an amalgam of both places. Certain details crop up in both books: in Remote People, for example, are to be found the prototypes of Dame Mildred Porch, Miss Tin and Youkhoumian.

The major figure in Black Mischief, Basil Seal, is a marked change from the previous leading figures, though there were, perhaps, suggestions in the person of Adam Symes of what the next "hero" would be. In no sense is Basil Seal a victim-hero. On the contrary, he is an amoral manipulator who exploits people and circumstances to secure his own comfort and enjoyment. The chaotic state

of London Society is only lightly sketched in this book but it is none the less apparent. Seal, however, is bored and the Azanian civil war is a heaven sent opportunity for him.

Basil Seal is the rebel son of a decadent aristocracy -- his father was Conservative Chief Whip. We first meet him recovering from a "racket" on the sofa of a strange flat, where one of the occupants was "eating sardines from the tin with a shoe horn."¹ From this sordid extreme we go to the other: rather rudely Seal harangues an elderly man in his London Club on the topic of the Azanian revolution. He is able to go to Margot Metroland's parties and is sufficiently confident of his position to appear like a tramp and to treat everybody, including Rex Monomark, the press baron, with studied casualness. He has been asked to stand down as Parliamentary Candidate after racketting around his constituency. He is presented as one who, though detached, is quite at home in his frantic world:

He stood in the doorway, a glass of whisky in one hand, looking insolently round the room, his head back, chin forward, shoulders rounded, dark hair over his forehead, contemptuous grey eyes over grey pouches, a proud, rather childish mouth, a scar on one cheek.²

These characteristics are more typical of a Grimes than of a Pennyfeather or a Symes, though Seal has a greater sophistication and poise than Grimes ever had. The latter deliberately flouts the conventions and totally ignores any

conception of morality. Lady Seal hopes to settle her son, Basil, into a regular, albeit circumscribed and dull, existence by making him read for the bar. Predictably, Seal ignores all this and departs for Azania, taking his mother's emerald bracelet with him which he sells for a fraction of its value at Port Said.

If, however, Seal seems an unscrupulous (while engaging) scoundrel to us, to Seth, Emperor of Azania, he stood "as the personification of all that glittering, intangible Western culture to which he aspired."³ Seth wants to modernize his state in accordance with the rather hazy notion of modern civilization which he acquired during his three years at Oxford. Since Seal to him represents the embodiment of progress and culture Seth makes him head of the new Ministry of Modernization whose function was "to promote the adoption of modern organization and habits of life throughout the Azanian Empire;"⁴ and to bring it up to date. Seal is faced with an impossible task which he seems to tackle with a curious mixture of idealism and hardheadedness. He genuinely wants to modernize the state and thus arranges loans for roadbuilding and copes with the crazy ideas with which Seth bombards him. At the same time, his idealism masks a savoir faire which indicates a complete grasp of human nature:

At half-past the Lord Chamberlain came to consult about cookery. A banquet was due to some Wanda notables next week. Seth had forbidden raw beef. What was he to give them? 'Raw beef,' said Basil. 'Call it steak tartare.' 'That is in accordance with modern thought.' 'Perfectly.'⁵

Seal is up against appalling odds in modernizing the country but the spate of hare-brained ideas ranging from the adoption of compulsory Swedish drill to the foundation of an institute for Astronomical research which pour from Seth tries him even more. The final straw comes when Seth prints banknotes with no reserves to back them. "It was on that afternoon that Basil at last lost his confidence in the permanence of the One Year Plan."⁶

Seal makes little or no attempt to involve himself with the British Legation, except to seduce a not unwilling Prudence, the daughter of the Envoy Extraordinary. He also makes a fatal mistake in quarrelling with Connolly, Seth's Irish Commander-in-Chief. When the country is split in two over Seth's birth-control scheme, Seal finds himself cut off, alone, on the weaker side. However, when the crisis occurs, unlike Waugh's earlier heroes, he stays in order to see the "racket"; and moreover manages to take part. This is characterized by Youkhoumian as "damn foolishness".⁷ When civil war breaks out, Seal appears at the British Legation, deliberately exaggerating an already serious situation for

the fun of frightening everyone and gingers them into unwanted activity. Seal seems always to be the centre of a storm; he causes uproar wherever he goes. He is a bounder but not entirely without a sense of loyalty. He finds Seth in the jungle, poisoned, and with some effort arranges for his burial according to the traditional tribal ritual -- at which he presides.

Seal is quite the reverse of the victim-hero but at the same time he is not a traditional hero, "on the side of the long arm of the law, the Sûreté, the church, the kirk, the headmaster and the head of the family."⁸ He is a distinctly shady character who is less immoral than amoral and despite his failings secures the sympathy of the reader much of the time. He will do the things he wants, regardless of any conventions in his way. He goes out to find action and to a large extent creates that action. Seal is really a disorder figure, a manipulator, in that he creates events but in an anarchy. This is a very marked change from the inertia of Paul Pennyfeather who allows himself to be engulfed by the action. Perhaps it is this which accounts for a certain admiration on Waugh's part.

Another figure for whom Waugh seems to evince a certain admiration is Krikor Youkhoumian. The latter is

a sharp businessman based on a real person, whom Waugh met in East Africa. Waugh's summing up of the real man is equally applicable to Youkhoumian:

He was an Armenian of rare character, named Bergebedgian; he spoke a queer kind of French with remarkable volubility, and I found great delight in all his opinions; I do not think I have ever met a more tolerant man; he had no prejudice or scruples of race, creed, or morals of any kind whatever; there were in his mind none of those opaque patches of principle; it was a single translucent pool of placid doubt; whatever splashes of precept had disturbed its surface from time to time had left no ripple; reflections flitted to and fro and left it unchanged.⁹

Youkhoumian is interested in himself to the exclusion of all else. He takes Basil under his wing only because he is likely to be a source of profit. At the beginning of the book when the country is at civil war, Youkhoumian manages to satisfy all factions and escape unscathed. When at Seth's victory ball, there is a possibility of violence, he quietly slips through the service door. Indeed, throughout the novel, whenever there is a possibility of a "bust-up"¹⁰ as he calls it, Youkhoumian always quietly disappears. As well as being an adept at saving his skin, Youkhoumian is also equally skilfull at filling his pocket. When the Ministry of Modernization is set up, he becomes the Financial Secretary. From this vantage point he is able to push through several profitable deals by buying things cheap and selling them at a vastly higher price to the government as well as engineering himself into useful and confidential

positions. In fact he is a born 'fixer'. At the end of the novel, when the old order has been swept away and replaced by a Franco-British protectorate, Youkhounian is still actively making money, quite undisturbed.

One cannot really regard Youkhounian as an entirely real personage, he is too distorted and one-sided for that. The best example of this is his monstrous cruelty in the treatment of his wife. When she is rather painfully tied up earlier on, he ignores her pain and goes to sleep. When she justifiably protests, Youkhounian replies: "You're always thinking of yourself. What about me?"¹¹ Perhaps it is because of this quality of unreality, that he does last into the new colonial regime while everybody else disappears. Certainly he seems to be an embodiment of a characteristic, a caricature rather than a wholly rounded character. On the other hand, he does play an important part, functioning as a link figure between East and West, old and new.

While the main interest in the novel is, as before, a discussion of 'corrupting modernism', Waugh is also at pains to comment on various aspects of decadence in the old order, and in the people belonging to the past world. It is too facile to say as many have done, that Waugh offers unqualified praise for the decaying Establishment. He is

sharply critical of them in many cases. Sir Joseph Mannering is an admirable example of this:

He was a self-assured old booby who in the easy and dignified role of family friend was invoked to aggravate most of the awkward situations that occurred in the lives of his circle.¹²

In his portrayal of Mannering, Waugh indicates the softness of the aristocracy. So many are pompous asses who want everyone to be like them and are afraid of unconventionality. The tragedy is that these people are so influential.

The main burden of Waugh's criticism is directed at the diplomats who represent Britain and France. The British Minister, Sir Samson Courtney, "whose comparative ill-success in diplomatic life was attributable rather to inattention than to incapacity,"¹³ is a ridiculous figure. The British diplomats are totally uninterested in Azanian affairs, being pre-occupied with more entertaining pursuits such as the organizing of gymkhanas, gardening or, in Sir Samson's case, knitting. Despite this diplomacy by default, the French are convinced that the English are engaged in some deep plot. In fact they are merely leading rather ineffectual lives, locked in their own little world, cut off from reality and fiercely resentful of any intrusion. The only interest the Envoy shows in external affairs is whether or not a new road will be built out to the legation.

When civil war breaks out for the second time, all the British Residents take refuge in the legation; their presence is too much for Sir Samson: "affairs had got completely out of control."¹⁴ His only concern is with his own peace of mind. General safety is only ensured by the one hard-headed member of the community, Captain Walsh, who prudently left for the coast before the outbreak of fighting and is, therefore, able to send up an aeroplane.

By contrast with the inanities of the British Legation, the machinations of the French seem still more absurd. Monsieur Ballon, the French minister, is convinced that the British have some dark plot in mind. Waugh indicates this by an ironic juxtaposition:

At the French Legation, also, news of Seth's victory had arrived. 'Ah,' said M. Ballon, 'so the English and the Italians have triumphed. But the game is not over yet. Old Ballon is not outwitted yet. There is a trick or two still to be won. Sir Samson must look to his laurels.'

While at that moment the Envoy was saying: 'Of course, it's all a question of the altitude. I've never heard of anyone growing asparagus up here but I can't see why it shouldn't do. We get the most delicious green peas.'¹⁵

Ballon is a type-figure who does all the stock things a French diplomat might be expected to do. His spies are everywhere, he takes extravagant precautions where the English take none; the most innocent actions are suspect to him -- thus, the Bishop's social call on the English Legation becomes an example of clericalism. No reason is

given for Ballon's machinations, why he should wish to engineer the downfall of Seth, unless it is for the sheer joy of plotting. It is fitting, therefore, that after Ballon with much effort has placed his nominee on the throne, with no attempt to displace him by the English, the new king should die during the course of his coronation.

The main theme of this novel is that of 'corrupting modernism'. While this topic is apparent in the earlier novels, here it becomes the dominant topic. The fact that the novel is set in Africa makes the contrast of old and new more marked and, by showing the effect of Western civilization on the African, Waugh is able to emphasize the decadence. Seth, the Emperor, having been educated at Oxford and having spent some time in Europe, has acquired a false and superficial idea of European civilization and progress with no understanding of the forces behind it. Seth is a naif. Moreover, despite his European education, the primitive instinct is still strong:

Night and the fear of darkness. In his room at the top of the old fort Seth lay awake and alone, his eyes wild with the inherited terror of the jungle, desperate with the acquired loneliness of civilization. Night was alive with beasts and devils and the spirits of dead enemies; before its power Seth's ancestors had receded, slid away from the attack, abandoning in retreat all the baggage of Individuality; they had lain six or seven in a hut; between them and night only a wall of mud and a ceiling of thatched grass; warm naked bodies breathing in the darkness an arm's reach apart, indivisibly unified so that they ceased to be six or seven scared blacks and became one person of more than human stature, less vulnerable to the peril that walked near them. Seth could not expand to meet the onset of fear. He was alone, dwarfed by the magnitude of the darkness, insulated from his fellows, strapped down to mean dimensions.¹⁶

Waugh very carefully points out that civilization has demoralized Seth. He is not possessed of the strength of mind to be alone but he has lost a sense of community with his fellows. Seth has not thrown off his past or his atavistic instincts, but he has been unfitted for rule. Education has only cast a veneer of civilization over him; it has not gone deep. Waugh is clearly conscious of the dangers of transplanting European ideas of progress to a totally different and unsuited environment. Seth's view of civilization is a superficial one; it is a vision of pseudo-progress. He has neither tenacity nor singleness of purpose. The gimmick, the gadget, excite Seth's imagination and, of course, their value is scant. This is remarked on at the beginning of the novel. Seth felt that he owed his victory to his single tank which for him symbolizes progress -- as it does, the destructive side. Connolly points out that it was utterly useless, being wildly unsuitable for Azania, and that the war was won by the age-old weapons of lies and the long spear. This is true of all Seth's bright ideas for modernization: they are flashily attractive and quite worthless, especially for an east African state.

Seth begins to rebuild the city of Debra Dowa, rather than concentrate on the real requirements of the country. The superficial nature of his attack on

primitivism is shown in the following memorandum from Seth to Seal:

For your information and necessary action, I have decided to abolish the following:

Death Penalty

Marriage

The Sakuyu language and all native dialects.

Infant mortality.

Totemism.

Inhuman Butchery.

Mortgages.

Emigration.

Please see to this. Also organize system of reservoirs for city's water supply and draft syllabus for competitive examination for public services. Suggest compulsory Esperanto. Seth.¹⁷

Seth shows a complete lack of knowledge of human nature and has the optimistic idea, born of idealism, that one can bring in progress and civilization by act of Parliament. The absurdity of applying European ideas to Africa is made abundantly clear in the boots episode. Youkhoulmian in order to line his own pocket has sold Seal the idea of compelling the army to wear boots -- which on men who had never worn boots before would have lamed them. The soldiers, never having seen boots before, think that they are a new form of rations and, on their receipt, eat them! It is a fitting irony that Youkhoulmian should work this trick successfully a second time on the Colonialists at the end of the book. Seth concentrates on the inessentials and trappings of modern life instead of considering the real needs of his people or their deep-rooted beliefs. To

foist birth control on a nation which measures virility by numbers of children is bound to lead to strife and unrest, even after a programme of education -- admittedly rather a ludicrous one.

Waugh is not, as he has been accused, showing any racialist leanings. In order to criticize the meretricious aspects of twentieth century ways of life, he uses African primitivism to show up the defects of the former. The author is always careful to maintain the suggestion of Western barbarism. The room, for example, in which Basil Seal seduces Prudence Courtney is sordid, to say the least -- Seal throws his cigar butt "into the tin bath which stood unemptied at the side of the bed; it sizzled and went out and floated throughout the afternoon, slowly unfurling in the soapy water."¹⁸ The conveying of a feeling of revulsion is deliberate. On a later occasion, Seal says: "'You're a grand girl, Prudence, and I'd like to eat you.' 'So you shall, my sweet . . . anything you want.'"¹⁹ But there is a macabre pendant to this casual conversation. At the native banquet after Seth's funeral, Seal discovers that he has actually eaten Prudence, whose plane has crashed. This calm introduction of the macabre as an aspect of life is peculiar to the early novels -- compare for example the manner of dying of Lord Tangent and Mr. Prendergast in Decline and Fall. It is also a feature

of this 'black humour' that the victims are innocent; here Prudence is a naive adolescent, preoccupied with her novel -- The Panorama of Life. Brutality of this order is a symptom of the new serious note which occurs in Black Mischief. Western civilization is as barbaric as that of Africa. It shows how civilized man is able to achieve greater corruption by virtue of his greater abilities. Waugh deliberately stimulates our disgust to emphasize that European culture is only a thin veneer, masking the savage beneath. He is critical, not of Africa, but of Europe.

This new seriousness even extends, at the end of the novel, to the Mayfair scene to which Basil Seal finally returns. The serious note is briefly sounded but, even so, it is plain that the charm and good-humour of Mayfair, which was apparent in the previous two novels, is now totally lacking. The hard-drinking Trumpingtons are shown as being not unlike fiddlers playing while a world burns around them. The suggestion of decadence is heightened by the fact that, although it is early evening, they are usually shown as still being in bed. There is also a repetition of the sordidness of Basil's room in Azania seen in the dog making messes on the bed. In the last chapter we hear of the Depression in which everyone

has lost their money but which has also made everyone other than the Trumpingtons very serious-minded. The Trumpingtons' attempts to be gay jar badly; they have no intention of allowing Basil to recount any of his Azanian experiences. They want to bury their heads and shut out everything awkward and unpleasant which might upset their round of enjoyment. They stand for the irresponsibility of the aristocracy, for the latter's abandonment of their duties in maintaining the general order picture. As well as condemning the younger generation, Waugh also criticises their elders. He points to the absurdity and fatuity of Lady Seal living in an Edwardian past, trying to uphold an outdated code, relying for advice on Sir Joseph Mannering.

Mildred Porch and Miss Tin, whom we meet in Africa, are further examples of the corrupted west though they are rather worse than the fatuous Lady Cynthia Seal because their fatuity makes them inhuman. Their liberalism is perverted. They belong in the same category as Sir William Lucas-Dockery of Decline and Fall. Waugh presents us with a satiric portrait of these campaigners against cruelty to animals, modelled on two people he met in Addis Abbaba who were writing an exposé of vice. Dame Porch and Miss Tin have little interest in anything apart from themselves. At the same time, they show absolutely no sense

of adaptation to a foreign country and their customs. In fact, their announced devotion to animals is purely selfish -- they certainly do not do any good for them. Their total insensibility to human suffering is a measure of their self-centredness: "Fed doggies in market place. Children tried to take food from doggies. Greedy little wretches . . . Road to station blocked brown motor lorry. Natives living in it. Also two goats. Seemed well but cannot be healthy for them so near natives."²⁰ Waugh is concerned with human values. Dame Porch and Miss Tin show how decadent the liberal ideas of the west have become when people's values are so distorted.

The main point that Waugh is putting across in Black Mischief is thus the speciousness of European civilization. At the same time, however, his position with regard to the natives seems ambiguous. He plainly is not impressed by their primitive state -- Viscount Boaz, the dandy, is an indication of native decadence. On the other hand, Waugh does show some respect for their qualities as warriors. There is a very sympathetic portrait of the Earl of Ngumo at Seth's victory ball.²¹ The natives are obviously incapable of ruling themselves as a democracy, but the Western way of life has also been shown to be decadent. The petty colonial restrictions and rules imposed

by the protectorate at the end of the book successfully hold down the country -- except Youkhoumian who continues unabashed -- but with no appreciation of its needs. The novel closes to the sound of Gilbert and Sullivan's "Tit-Willow" -- Europe's mark of civilization is a song from a comic operetta. For a space the old forces of barbarism and superstition have triumphed over Seth's pseudo-progress, but the Colonial powers represent an even more dangerous form of pseudo-progress than that of Seth. Waugh would seem to be arguing that all forms of government are superficial. (In later life he refused to vote or take any part in the actions of government.) An instance of the inanity of all government action in Black Mischief is provided by the broken-down motor-car in the middle of the main road of the port of Matodi inhabited by a native family. It becomes a symbol of permanence. Various attempts are made to move it but to no avail and finally the Colonial administrators give the family permanent possession as an example of British justice.

Black Mischief is another manifestation of Waugh's waste land vision. He is profoundly pessimistic about the state of his world, and no solution to the situation is offered. (The only religious element in the book is some mild satire at the expense of the Anglican Bishop and the

Nestorian Patriarch.) The novel is more serious than the preceding books, and this is heightened by the fact that Waugh steps out of his fantastical world into the almost real and emphasises the chaos and empty pretensions of that real world by contrasting it with the primitive.

The conflict of the two is deliberate:

The story deals with the conflict of civilization, with all its attendant and deplorable ills, and barbarism. The plan of my book throughout was to keep the darker aspects of barbarism continually and unobtrusively present, a black and mischievous background against which the civilized and semi-civilized characters performed their parts; I wished it to be the continuous, remote throbbing of the hand drums, constantly audible, never visible, which any traveller in Africa will remember as one of his most haunting impressions. I introduced the cannibal theme in the first chapter and repeated it in another key in the incident of the soldiers eating their boots, thus hoping to prepare the reader for the sudden tragedy when barbarism at last emerges from the shadows and usurps the stage.²²

Waugh sees the failure of liberal humanism; democracy has been eroded by a regimentation both of the right and of the left. The modern world is subject to pressures which are potentially lethal. The drift away from an ideal of democracy either in favour of fascism or communism -- which Waugh sees coming together -- can only lead to the sterile world of Love Among the Ruins. Black Mischief is a tragi-comedy. Much of the early geniality is gone; the laughter has become harsh and cruel.

In Scoop, written in 1938, after A Handful of Dust, Waugh returns to the theme of decadent European civilization

in relation to Africa. The novel grew out of his experiences as a war correspondent in Abyssinia at the time of the war with Italy. Much of the novel is devoted to satirizing the press and showing its effect on a primitive country. Waugh makes use of the same conflict as has been discussed above to indicate the thin veneer of culture and civilization of Western man. He does, however, develop a new aspect which is to assume greater proportions in other novels. The novel centres round William Boot, a 'dim' figure who lives in a decaying country house, Boot Magna Hall, surrounded by somewhat eccentric relatives and servants. Boot is an innocent whose sole aim is to maintain his peaceful existence and to go on writing a nature column for The Daily Beast. Against his will and by accident, he is sent out to Ishmaelia as a war correspondent and through sheer lackadaisicalness "scoops" the news of an abortive attempt by the Ishmaelian Communists to take over the country. Despite himself, he has had enormous success and returns to London to be fêted. He manages to avoid the lionising which he hates and returns to his old life, his nature column, "Lush Places", with a contract for two thousand pounds a year. Boot has ventured out into the world, away from the security of Boot Magna Hall and despite his innocence and naiveté survives the experience. Indeed not only does he survive, but he makes money so that his

position is consolidated and the future of his way of life assured. Boot is the only hero in Waugh's novels to undergo such a happy turn of events.

Though Scoop is a novel of unadulterated good humour, without any darker undertones, Waugh's novels begin to sound a deeper and more anxious note. At the end of Black Mischief, Basil Seal shows signs of turning serious and the laughter has become corrosive. Tony Last, the protagonist of Waugh's next novel, A Handful of Dust, is driven out of his country house and his settled contented life, never to return. A Handful of Dust develops the theme of decay in the order-picture and the lack of values as manifest in the world of the English upper class. While Basil Seal is able to exploit the 'lunatic world', Tony Last is destroyed by it. A Handful of Dust is the apotheosis of Waugh's waste land vision: if Black Mischief is tragi-comedy, A Handful of Dust is pure tragedy.

CHAPTER IV

A HANDFUL OF DUST

A Handful of Dust carries as its epigraph the passage from T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" from which the title is taken:

I will show you something different from either
Your shadow at morning striding behind you
Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;
I will show you fear in a handful of dust.¹

Eliot in his poem tries to set out the aridity and barrenness of Europe after the First World War; a world in which there is to be found no sense of values or order. Waugh has been doing precisely the same thing in his early novels -- looking out on an anarchy -- but within a framework of comic fantasy. In A Handful of Dust, Waugh expresses most fully his "waste land" vision. The book is a logical development of what he has been saying before. A greater note of seriousness is apparent and although comedy is still strong in the book, it is less organic than before. Moreover the laughter is harsh and cruel; it is corrosive, not urbane. However, where the other novels indicate a satirical commentary on the immediate moment, it seems reasonable to say that A Handful of Dust has a wider application. Waugh

indicates the failure of a tradition, the breakdown of liberal humanism. The increase in gravity is accounted for by the realistic approach (except for the end) and the fact that Waugh does show us the fear of which Eliot talks, lying behind the barrenness.

The hero, Tony Last, is another innocent naif who is destroyed by outside forces. Last is an English gentleman, the possessor of a great house, and married to a society beauty who is herself the daughter of a peer. It would seem, therefore, that Last is very firmly established within a well-ordered framework and as such is regarded by his friends:

I often think Tony Last's one of the happiest men I know. He's got just enough money, loves the place, one son he's crazy about, devoted wife, not a worry in the world.²

It is an ironic envy -- by the end of the book all is gone.

We are given two viewpoints of Tony Last -- through our own eyes as the detached reader and also through the biased eyes of his wife Brenda's friends. To us he appears as a dutiful and kindly man living as a country squire -- Brenda teases him about "posing as an upright God-fearing gentleman of the old school."³ It is a part he plays admirably. He reads the lessons in church, visits his tenantry and does all the appropriate things. Although Waugh presents this figure as being worthy of approval, he,

at the same time, does make us aware of certain inadequacies. In some ways, Last has never grown up and is very resentful of any interruption or intrusion in his routine. Thus his bedroom is unchanged since childhood:

. . . but every year added to its contents, so that it now formed a gallery representative of every phase of his adolescence -- the framed picture of a dreadnaught . . . a photographic group of his private school; a cabinet called 'The Museum' filled with the results of a dozen desultory hobbies . . .⁴

There is an enviable security in the nursery stage but one scarcely adequate for the modern world. While waiting for his wife to come down from London after their son's death, to pass the time he plays the only card game he knows -- one from the nursery called Animal Snap. Last is reluctant to leave his home, Hetton Abbey, for any other place and if a guest comes to stay he makes himself scarce. As Brenda puts it, he is "madly feudal".⁵

While the reader gains a picture of a dull but essentially kindly and sincere person, Brenda's friends give an entirely different picture. Mrs. Beaver calls him a prig; Jenny Abdul Akbar is mildly impressed -- he's a good listener and thereby flatters her. Most of them contemptuously dismiss him as "old boy."⁶ Early on, Brenda's friends have done little more than sneer but after he refuses to be divorced by Brenda and pay her alimony their feelings become more intense. Despite the fact that the blame lies on her side, the general feeling is against him -- he is

to be condemned.

Tony Last, as will be discussed, is betrayed by his wife who makes a determined effort to get the most she can out of him. He had trusted her completely, never once harbouring any suspicions. To this sort of man, honest and thinking the best of everything, the full knowledge of betrayal by his wife, whom he loved deeply, was inevitably a great shock, a shock which shattered his world. His great love apart from her was Hetton Abbey, his home. Initially true to his goodness, he is prepared to provide evidence for divorce but after he finds that Brenda expects him to give up Hetton in order to set her up with another man, he objects. His whole traditional way of life has been destroyed, all sense of order and value has gone. The ground has been cut away from underneath his feet:

For a month now he had lived in a world bereft of order; it was as though the whole reasonable and decent constitution of things, the sum of all he had experienced or learned to expect, were an inconspicuous, inconsiderable object mislaid somewhere on the dressing table; no outrageous circumstance in which he found himself, no new mad thing brought to his notice, could add a jot to the all-encompassing chaos that shrieked about his ears.⁷

The pressure of events pushes Tony Last to the sticking point: he refuses to be divorced, refuses to allow any money to his wife and leaves the country for Brazil -- as a refuge from the chaos which is all that remains of a way of life

which seemed so secure. Last emerges remarkably well from all his trials. When he goes down to provide evidence for divorce at Brighton, he treats his partner and her appalling child with amazing consideration and kindness. What in many cases would be a sordid interlude, in this instance only redounds to his credit. Certainly, however, there is a strong element of cruelty-justified^{in him-} which comes out towards the end of the book.

Brenda Last is a society beauty, bored, not without reason, of life in the country with its lack of new faces. John Beaver who comes down for the week-end is a rather dull social parasite but he represents a change. This possibly gives him a spurious glamour in Brenda's eyes. At all events, out of sheer boredom, she starts an affair with him. It must be noted that Brenda is practised in pandering to a man. She flatters the dominant male in Beaver and when he is inclined to sulk she appeals to him for aid. It is because he is so dreary and second-rate -- witness the way he calls his mother "Mumsy"⁸ -- that she falls for him. His attraction is that he has to be taught a lot of things. The affair with Beaver is, of course, a complete and utter betrayal of Tony who is devoted and has absolute faith in her. All this Brenda ignores, telling an elaborate lie about taking an Economics course in London in order to provide an excuse for being away and taking a

flat. Tony suspects nothing. The whole business is made more sordid by the fact that neither Beaver nor Brenda at the outset love each other. Meantime, Tony pines for his wife, presenting rather a pathetic picture. Jock Grant-Menzies and he get very drunk in London and ask to visit Brenda in the flat. She refuses and treats Tony with great callousness:

If I know Tony, he'll be tortured with guilt for weeks to come. It was maddening last night, but it was worth it. He's put himself so much in the wrong now that he won't dare to feel resentful, let alone say anything, whatever I do. And he hasn't really enjoyed himself at all, the poor sweet, so that's a good thing too. He had to learn not to make surprise visits.⁹

The only way in which his love and trust is repaid is by Brenda's attempt to alleviate Tony's loneliness. She does express some concern for him: "I am not absolutely happy about Tony;"¹⁰ "I'm very fond of Tony, you know, in spite of the monstrous way he behaved."¹¹ This leads her to try to find him a mistress, partly to salve her conscience but primarily because it would be inconvenient if "he took to drink or something."¹² Jenny Abdul-Akbar is a failure in this rôle -- Tony calls her a "joke-woman"¹³, although she is wildly successful with his son, John Andrew. At least, however, Brenda's feelings of guilt are stifled:

'We must write it down as a failure, definitely.'
 'What does the old boy expect? It isn't as though he's everybody's money.'
 'I daresay it would have been all right, if she hadn't got his name wrong.'
 'Anyway, this lets you out. You've done far more than most wives would to cheer the old boy up.'
 'Yes, that's certainly true,' said Brenda.¹⁴

In other words it is all Tony's fault.

Brenda is utterly selfish, without even the slightest suggestion of morality. Tony must be taught not to pay surprise visits, he must sell Hetton to pay for her pleasure; John Andrew, her son, must do without his mother. She reduces Tony to a pathetic figure, lonely and unhappy, feeling cut off from his wife. Time and time again he speaks of his trust and love for Brenda. In his bewilderment, all he can feel is that "he had got into the habit of loving and trusting Brenda."¹⁵

The height of Brenda's monstrous behaviour is reached when the news of her son's death is announced. Jock Grant-Menzies comes up to London to tell her. She assumes he refers to her lover, John Beaver, and is greatly relieved when she finds it is only her son. And it is only when she thinks something has happened to him, that she realizes that she does in fact love Beaver, but he soon falls out of love with her, if indeed he ever did love her. This love affair does not even have the merit of being a grande passion. It is a sordid desertion of Tony for an unattractive insignificant man. Brenda continues to satisfy herself at the expense of her responsibilities as wife and mother. She brings about the fall and destruction of her husband. To herself there

merely comes a period of unhappiness and then, after Tony's presumed death, a quick re-marriage to Jock Grant-Menzies. Brenda suffers very little so that her happiness is only momentarily impaired.

Brenda is aided and abetted by her friends -- who are of the Mayfair set but are rather different from those presented before, lacking their charm and wit. Indeed there is a vicious streak. Mrs. Beaver and her son are parasites, battenning on others for a livelihood and doing them down at the same time. Party-going is still strong but whereas in Vile Bodies there was an interest in variety, the ideal now is "an accurate replica of all the best parties [they] had been to in the past year."¹⁶ The ever-to-be-feared boredom is staved off by card-playing and fortune telling. The love affair between Brenda and Beaver is a heaven-sent opportunity. Brenda, since she went to live in the country, became something of a legendary figure while Beaver is a joke figure. "The choice of Beaver raised the whole escapade into a realm of poetry for Polly and Daisy and Angela and all the gang of gossips."¹⁷ The only comment is "hard cheese on Tony,"¹⁸ which becomes a refrain. The progress of the affair is devoured greedily, for this is an aimless empty world, moving rapidly from one luncheon party to another. Polly Cockpurse, Jenny Abdul-Akbar and

Souki de Foucauld-Esterhazy need some scandal to fill in their leisure moments between visits to a bonesetter or a crook fortune-teller.¹⁹ They have little real concern for anyone. While Brenda is deceiving Tony they all egg her on and offer her their support -- to them, the latter is a bore. As they leave Hetton after a weekend, one symbolically throws the button-hole Tony gave her out of the car window, rejecting Hetton and all it stands for. Similarly, they approve when Brenda tries to find Tony a mistress. When, however, Brenda is cut off from both Tony and Beaver, left on her beam ends, with not enough to eat, she is ignored. When someone has been sucked of all they can offer by way of entertainment, they can safely be dropped. It is a cut-throat society.

In A Handful of Dust, the plot has a greater significance than before. The previous novels have been episodic in form but here there is a focal point -- the failure of a marriage in 'High Society' -- and the novel goes on to analyse the effects and underlying causes of that failure. In some ways this novel which is a tragedy in the fullest sense, does arouse a sense of pity and fear in the reader. Last represents l'homme moyen sensuel; his is not a fall from greatness but a fall from an intermediate state. Despite the fact that he is distinctly upper-class and the

owner of a large mansion house, the reader does not have any difficulty in sympathising with him since his predicament is recognizable as a common one and his aspirations and affections are much the same as our own. The reader is to a very large extent able to identify with ~~Last~~ in a way he did not in the earlier novels. The narrative shows the happy, ideal state in the beginning when the members of the Hetton household are living in complete harmony. However, before introducing the reader to Hetton, Waugh opens the novel with the disorder figure of John Beaver, who is to destroy the ordered structure of life. Beaver seems such an insignificant impotent figure, unable to find a job, used as a last-minute replacement for his friend's dinner parties and perhaps displaying elements of the child-mind -- he still calls his mother "Mumsy"!²⁰ From this point on, Waugh shows how the ordered world of a happy marriage is destroyed. It is significant that Waugh should call his protagonist 'Last' -- he is a symbol of a vanishing, ordered way of life. The climax of this decay is the death in a hunting accident of John Andrew, the Lasts' son. It is preceded by the growing sordidness of atmosphere. The flat in which Brenda Last lives in London symbolizes the unpleasantness and dishonesty of all the petty deceptions designed to conceal her infidelity to her husband. The death of John

Andrew seems in some way the sacrifice of an innocent; a piece of the unpremeditated gratuitous cruelty which occurs in all Waugh's novels. This accident prefigures the shambles of the end -- Tony the prisoner of a mad half-breed settler and Brenda without money, friends or hope. The death of John Andrew does, however, bring a clean break. Only the child, it would seem, held them together. The irony of a letter of condolence from Brenda's mother is heightened by its contents: "Dear children, at a time like this only yourselves can be any help to each other. Love is the only thing that is stronger than sorrow."²¹ In the preceding passage Brenda has announced how her life at Hetton is over and while staying with friends she has written to indicate her abandonment of Tony.

Thereafter the uncomfortable process of divorce starts and one by one all Tony's illusions are destroyed. He becomes a more solid and forceful personality. He bluntly refuses to give up Hetton to buy, as he puts it, Beaver for Brenda. His world has collapsed and Last escapes from the ruins, in the company of a so-called archeologist, to Brazil.²² The basic symbol of order in this book is that of Gothic architecture. Waugh chronicles the movement of the book in three phases -- English Gothic I, II and III. Last's illusion of order is expressed in similar terms. With divorce, all is destroyed:

A whole Gothic world had come to grief . . . Here was now no armour glittering through the forest glades, no embroidered feet on the green-sward, the cream and dappled unicorns had fled . . .²³

While on board ship, Tony Last has a mild romance with a passenger on her way home to Trinidad but as soon as she discovers he is still married -- and it should be noted that in saying so, no blame is apportioned -- the flirtation stops. In fact Tony Last's voyage to Brazil is a quest -- something in the nature of a mediaeval Romance -- for a new world, a new order.

Dr. Messinger has caught Tony's imagination with his description of the lost city. The latter transforms it into his own mode of thought:

It was Gothic in character, all vanes and pinnacles, gargoyles, battlements, groining and tracery, pavilions and terraces, a transfigured Hetton, pennons and banners floating on the sweet breeze, everything luminous and translucent; a coral citadel crowning a green hill top. Sown with daisies, among groves and streams, a tapestry landscape filled with heraldic and fabulous animals and symmetrical, disproportionate blossom.²⁴

It is a tragic delusion. Messinger is an incompetent and their exploration is a débâcle. They are rapidly lost, their discomforts become acute and finally they are deserted by their native bearers. The question becomes not one of finding the city but of emerging alive, especially when Last catches malaria. The quest for a new life is disastrous, Messinger is killed. Tony is rescued but by a mad half-breed who plans to keep him in subjection reading Dickens. He is

imprisoned with that gratuitous cruelty we have observed before in Waugh's novels. The quest turns out to be a purgatory from which Last is sent not to a paradisaal celestial city, but to a hell-on-earth, an eternity of Dickens.

Side by side with Last's destruction, Waugh presents us with the decay of Brenda. The movement of the action alternates between Brazil and London. Brenda admits to still loving Tony and caring for him. Beaver falls out of love with Brenda and she is left deserted. Penniless, she barely has enough to eat. Last, pushed to the limits of his endurance, has deliberately left her without money. Waugh handles superbly the delirium which is induced by Tony's malaria. While Brenda suffers in London, Tony in his mental disorder is obsessed by her. At one point we move from Brenda in London "in an agony of resentment and self-pity"²⁵ to Brenda and all the figures from Hetton in a beautifully realized delirious fantasy in Brazil where Ambrose, the butler, announces "The city is served."²⁶ From the release of fantasy and illusion Tony Last emerges to his imprisonment in the jungle. Brenda found Hetton a prison, cutting her off from the gay social life she wanted. The price of her release is the imprisonment of her husband. Todd tricks Last into staying in the jungle by concealing him from his rescuers. Last has reached the ultimate point

of misery. He is presumed dead and his beloved Hetton passes to his cousins. Brenda Last after her period of tribulation comes to a happier state -- she marries Jock Grant-Menzies, Tony's bosom friend.

The mock-Gothic structure of Hetton Abbey is a symbol of order which runs throughout the book. The frontispiece gives us an idea of the full riot of Gothic-revival with battlements and central clocktower, "the ecclesiastical gloom of the great hall."²⁷ There are, moreover, Arthurian associations:

. . . the Dining hall, with its hammer beam roof and pitch-pine minstrels' gallery; the bedrooms with their brass bedsteads, each with a frieze of Gothic text, each named from Malory, Yseult, Elaine, Mordred and Merlin, Gawaine and Bedivere, Lancelot, Perceval, Tristram, Galahad, his own dressingroom, Morgan le Fay and Brenda's Guinevere, where the bed stood on a dais, the walls hung with tapestry, the fireplace like a tomb of the thirteenth century.²⁸

Tony Last is very closely attached to his house despite its impracticality and lack of modern conveniences:

His aunt Frances . . . remarked that the plans of the house must have been adapted by Mr. Pecksniff from one of his pupils' designs for an orphanage. But there was not a glazed brick or an encaustic tile that was not dear to Tony's heart.²⁹

Hetton stands for a way of life, a sense of ordered well being; with Last thus living a routine life feeling he has a responsibility to the "place" itself. Hetton is a citadel of the ideal life, a utopia which is betrayed from within by Brenda who detests it and attacked from without by her friends.

London life is shown by Waugh to have a meretricious glitter. Bratt's club has a spurious air of antiquity about it despite its very recent foundation. There is an implicit contrast between the ideal of the country and the sordidness of Town. Brenda exchanges Hetton for a miniscule flat in London:

There are a good many smells at present and the bath makes odd sounds and when you turn on the hot tap there's just a rush of air and that's all, and the cold tap keeps dripping and the water is rather brown, and the cupboard doors are jammed and the curtains won't pull right across so that the street lamp shines in all night . . . but it is lovely.³⁰

The flat is seen as evil, the centre of the degeneracy, while Hetton is seen as good. It is a symbol of the past, of the essential rightness of tradition. The attack is carried right into the heart of the citadel by Brenda's friends led by Mrs. Beaver, who plan the modernization of a Hetton room -- walls of white chromium and a natural sheepskin carpet, while one says "I'd blow the whole thing sky-high."³¹ With Brenda's final desertion, however, the modernization is called off. Mrs. Beaver offers to redecorate the chapel as a memorial to Tony Last but this is rejected. Instead a plain monolith of locally worked and quarried stone is erected. "I think he [Tony Last] would have preferred this," says Lady St. Cloud.³² The attack on the citadel by outside forces is successfully repulsed.

If the house is 'good', it also shares something of the prison theme. Brenda regards it as a prison while Tony ends imprisoned in the jungle. When the latter's cousins inherit the place, sharing his pride and love for it, they keep silver-foxes in wire cages. Out of his silver-fox farm, Teddy Last hopes to restore Hetton to its former glory. Under the new owner, Hetton, by virtue of death duties, is reduced in circumstances, -- its clock strikes fourteen instead of eight, for example, but at least it remains in the family and is still strong. The attack of the corrupt and corrupting forces from outside has had no final effect. If the house, Hetton, has suffered a fall from greatness, at the expense of sacrificing Tony Last it survives, fighting a "holding action" against a decadent and degenerate world. Hetton symbolizes the hopelessness and pathos of the right way of life in a corrupt and self-destructive world. Waugh indicates the failure of a tradition, a liberal humane set of values. Gothic architecture, with the soaring arch and the spire reaching up to the sky, expressed mediaeval man's aspiration to be united with his God. Hetton is a debased mock-gothic; it survives but only as a shadow. There is no continuity of strength. "Hetton, within the limits of Tony's understanding, is an emblem of the true City."³³ Thus Frank Kermode sums it up.

Hetton is one of a series of houses in Waugh's novels; from this point on they assume greater significance.

Tony Last finds his world totally depraved, for man on his own is corrupt in a fallen world. With complete detachment, Waugh reveals a world of horrifying boredom, cruelty and above all superficiality. Last's attempt to find the new city is a projection of his quest for order. Hetton is not the Celestial City; nor is it the Gothic city of his delirium. The true city is to be found in Brides-head Revisited. Last fails because his tradition has failed. His religion is empty. Tony functions as a squire in church, not as a believer. The Anglican Church is woefully inadequate. The church has no contact with reality: the local vicar still thinks he is an army chaplain in India, having made no change in his approach to suit altered conditions so that to the villagers "Few of the things said in church seemed to have any direct reference to themselves."³⁴ When his son is killed, Last says: "after all the last thing one wants to talk about at a time like this is religion."³⁵ It would perhaps be in order here to draw a connection between the Mock-Gothic element of Hetton and Anglicanism. Liberal humanism has failed and amoral people like Brenda and her friends are able to succeed. The Anglican church is not a strong enough base so that

when Tony reaches a nadir he has no inner resources on which to rely; he admits in the jungle to never having thought much about religious matters. Sham-Gothic anglicanism has given Tony some strength -- his good qualities -- but it is not enough to save him from destruction. Hetton Abbey persists in a greatly reduced fashion by virtue of its tenuous gothicism.

Last is the supreme victim: it is the innocent who suffer. He is a decent, intelligent, honourable man whom Waugh presents as having a sound and admirable set of values. Tragically the jungle, both actually and metaphorically, closes in on him and destroys him. Unfortunately Last's code is inadequate, lacking an interior strength. There is no place for his tradition-guided values of order in a modern corrupt world. Perhaps Waugh's own sense of a failure of tradition comes here. The Roman Catholic church represented to him an unbroken continuity, deriving an immense strength from the past. Waugh is profoundly pessimistic -- he arouses a feeling of absolute despair. Mr. Todd's reaction to Little Dorrit is the same as ours to A Handful of Dust: "There are passages in that book I can never hear without the temptation to weep."³⁶

A Handful of Dust is the culmination of Waugh's discussion of a spiritual bankruptcy where a decent, honest man is crushed by the waste land world because he is lacking

in the power to cope with it. The next group of novels to be discussed indicates a way out of a world devoid of values where one can only despair. In Put Out More Flags Waugh suggests a need for penance, purgation and atonement. In Brideshead Revisited, the Roman Catholic church will be seen as a rational instrument of order and harmony which can provide the requisite inner strength. The world is still destructive and threatens but does not overwhelm Brideshead. The crucial question is -- what had Brideshead that Hetton lacked?³⁷

CHAPTER V

BRIDESHEAD REVISITED

(Included: Put Out More Flags)

Before Waugh issued Brideshead Revisited in 1945, he published Put Out More Flags, a novel about the 'phoney war.' The tone is still lighthearted but a more serious note has crept in. The 'hero', Basil Seal, has lost some of the engaging charm which we saw in Black Mischief. The time has come for him to have sown his wild oats and to settle down. Seal marries his mistress whose husband is killed in a futile and fruitless attempt to establish liaison with one of his regiment's sub-divisions. "I knew we needed a death," said his widow. "I never thought it was his."¹ The death of Cedric Lyne marks the close of an era. Waugh in this novel makes his farewell to the palmy days of the twenties and thirties. He also finally leaves the world of fantasy. This farewell is made quite explicit in both the Epigraph and the letter of dedication to Randolph Churchill:

A man getting drunk at a farewell party should strike a musical tone, in order to strengthen his spirit . . . and a drunk military man should order gallons and put out more flags in order to increase his military splendour.²

Dear Randolph,

I am afraid that these pages may not be altogether acceptable to your ardent and sanguine nature. They deal mostly, with a race of ghosts, the survivors of a world we both knew ten years ago . . . These characters are no longer contemporary in sympathy; they were forgotten even before the war; but they lived on delightfully in holes and corners and, like everyone else, they have been disturbed in their habits by the rough intrusion of current history. There they are in that odd, dead period before the Churchillian renaissance, which people called at the time the Great Bore War.³

The gaieties of the Mayfair world are gone forever. In future, life will be a much more austere affair. Waugh makes two very interesting points. One is that the responsibility for this new drabness and austerity may to a large extent be placed on the shoulders of those who will suffer most. Seal, in his rôle as the happy exploiter, attacks the pretensions and tranquility of the country bourgeois by threatening to billet three unspeakable evacuees on them, but he is always prepared to accept a bribe to place them elsewhere. If the exploited would defy Seal they would have avoided both the necessity of accepting the children and of giving a bribe. When someone does defy Seal, he collapses. The point Waugh is making is that by and large those who are exploited deserve to be exploited and their refusal to stand up to the forces of destructive change is responsible for the collapse of an ordered society. If the comfortable bourgeoisie had fought for

their way of life and had not buried their heads, the new austerity would not have been necessary. Inactivity and a refusal to think are merely the passive, negative sides of direct aggression. Cedric Lyne's aestheticism -- which foreruns that of Charles Ryder -- manifested in his collection of grottos, represents an escape from reality. His death in battle by which nothing is achieved is an inevitable end.

The other point Waugh makes is that the gaieties and high living of the past need to be paid for. Alastair Trumpington joins the army as a ranker partly because "he thought that perhaps if we hadn't had so much fun perhaps there wouldn't have been any war."⁴ Waugh does make a specifically religious connection, however: "He went into the ranks as a kind of penance or whatever it's called that religious people are always supposed to do."⁵ The underlying theme of the book is that of a need for atonement in order that a new world may be possible. Seal is deprived of his wish to become one of "the hardfaced men who did well out of the war"⁶ and after an unsatisfactory spell as an intelligence agent joins the Commandos. Ambrose Silk, another of Seal's dupes who refuses to see what happens round about him, undergoes a purgative period on the West Coast of Ireland. Like Cedric Lyne, his aestheticism

is shown up to be a dangerous delusion which must be paid for. Ironically, he escapes from London disguised as a Roman Catholic priest who for want of a breviary reads a racing paper.

The religious note has already been raised very early in the book. One of Seal's girlfriends, now an agnostic intellectual, when faced by the crisis of an air-raid harks back to her religion: "I wish I'd been to church. I was brought up in a convent. I wanted to be a nun once. I wish I was a nun."⁷ The book indicates a strong pessimism about the future:

But you see one can't expect anything to be perfect now. In the old days if there was one thing wrong it spoiled everything; from now on for all our lives, if there's one thing right the day is made.⁸

The War has become inevitable but, as the Second Epigraph indicates, it must be fought and may well be regarded as a purgatory from which, with the aid of Sir Joseph Mainwaring's "new spirit,"⁹ something may emerge which is more satisfactory:

A little injustice in the heart can be drowned by wine, but a great injustice in the world can be drowned only by the sword.¹⁰

In many ways, therefore, Put Out More Flags may be regarded as the formal closure of the inter-war years and as the preparation for the next work Brideshead Revisited. Waugh leaves the world of Mayfair never to return. He leaves

it with a covert suggestion of regeneration through Christianity. Put Out More Flags has a serious undertone, seen before in A Handful of Dust which probes the waste land and looks at some of its causes and effects. There is a sense of clearing the decks for a new approach. The Second World War completed what the First World War began and this seems to have brought about a change in Waugh's writing. Hitherto, he has been primarily concerned with large groups and generalities. Now in Brideshead Revisited, Waugh comes down to the particular and discusses the waste land and the lack of values as it affects one particular family and more especially one particular man, Charles Ryder. The ironic detachment characterized by Edmund Wilson as "Never Apologize, never Explain" vanishes. Waugh emerges from his concealment and offers an apology for his view of Catholicism.¹¹ Put Out More Flags shows the dawning sense of a pressing reality. There is now no room for the fantasy world, the special world Waugh created. The future novels, while no less witty, do not have the same sense of frivolity as the earlier.

Brideshead Revisited is essentially the reminiscences of a period in the life of one man, Charles Ryder. Indeed the novel is subtitled The Sacred and Profane Memories of Captain Charles Ryder. An attempt is made to show the development of a personality, and, moreover, a change from

agnosticism, and open hostility to Roman Catholicism to at first a friendly acceptance and finally to a conversion. The ironic detachment of the early work is no longer applicable where the author is committed to a point of view. It is an indication of this that the story is told in the first person.

Ryder, the product of a lonely and somewhat drab background, goes up to Oxford. His cousin Jasper gives him a number of staid rules of conduct as to the running of his life and Ryder settles down to a prosaic existence amongst "a small circle of college intellectuals who maintained a middle course of culture between the flamboyant 'aesthetes' and the proletarian scholars."¹² Indeed, Ryder at this stage is not unlike Paul Pennyfeather at Scone. Certainly his friend Collins is remarkably like Pennyfeather's earnest friend, Arthur Potts. This even-tempered existence is interrupted by the somewhat dramatic appearance of Sebastian Flyte -- he vomits through Ryder's open window. Sebastian opens a new epoch in his life. It is he who opens for Ryder the door "on an enclosed and enchanted garden, which was somewhere, not overlooked by any window, in the heart of that grey city."¹³ Through Sebastian, Ryder meets Anthony Blanche, "the 'aesthete' par excellence"¹⁴ who reads extracts from The Waste Land to the hearties on their way to the river, and he is introduced to

the beauty and order of the country mansion, Brideshead Castle. Despite the warning protests of his cousin, Jasper, and of Anthony Blanche, Charles is wholly captivated. After his motherless and lonely childhood, Sebastian Flyte's circle, happy in being able to flout convention, has for Ryder a glamour which is totally irresistible.

The relationship with the Flytes and the personality of Anthony Blanche invigorate Ryder and bring him in touch with a world and attitude of mind which no other protagonist of the early novels meets. The exception is Basil Seal, although he in many ways displays the child-mind. Paul Pennyfeather and Adam Fenwick-Symes have an innocence and ineffectualness which we do not see in Ryder. Moreover, while they are the victims of circumstances and external pressures, Ryder is the master of his own life; he does not allow his activities to be run for him. Similarly, Last has a blindness and a naiveté which make him the supreme victim. The initial similarity to Pennyfeather at Scone noted above would no doubt have developed into a similar trend, turning Ryder into a Candide figure. This is halted by Sebastian and Blanche who open that door into the "enchanted garden"¹⁵ which can be discovered in Oxford. The other major difference is that Waugh gives a much fuller sense of a 'whole' man

in Ryder, a realization of a personality which we do not find earlier. The reader is made very much aware of a recognizable, credible person and the reader sees a characterization in depth which he had not before. Where the earlier characters acquiesce passively in what happens to them, Ryder fights his way.

The Flyte influence is not entirely beneficent. Sebastian has a fatal charm, a charm born of an ease and flippancy of manner. Anthony Blanche takes Ryder out to dinner expressly to warn him of the dangers of charm, how it can destroy. When they meet some twenty years later, after an exhibition of Ryder's pictures, the same point is made.

Charm is the great English blight. It does not exist outside these damp islands. It spots and kills anything it touches. It kills love; it kills art; I greatly fear, my dear Charles, it has killed you.¹⁶

And Charles Ryder agrees. But so far as the youthful Ryder is concerned any warning delivered against Sebastian Flyte is bound to be disregarded. Writing to Ryder at this stage, Sebastian mourns "for [his] lost innocence. It never looked like living."¹⁷ For Charles, the innocence of his Oxford life is at the root of his development. In the later years of his life when his marriage has become empty and he realizes his art is insincere, he looks back on the period with nostalgia. Thus Waugh entitles this Section "Et in Arcadia Ego." This phrase is inscribed on the skull which

Ryder keeps in his room, implying that even in the midst of the happiness of Arcadia there is death.

Sebastian introduces Ryder to a new side of existence -- the appreciation of beauty and the Roman Catholic church. The two are indissolubly linked and this is nowhere more strongly apparent than in Brideshead Castle, the Baroque country house with its art nouveau chapel. Anthony Blanche, the man who detects the artist in Charles, is, it should be remembered, a Roman Catholic. Sebastian points out the beauties of the Botanical Gardens, suggests the inadequacy of Roger Fry's dictum about "significant form."¹⁸ The very beauties of Brideshead Castle are an aesthetic education. Sebastian teaches Charles to appreciate architecture genuinely and not to confuse a knowledge of history with an awareness of beauty. On Ryder's inquiring if Inigo Jones built the dome, he replies: "Oh, Charles, don't be such a tourist. What does it matter when it was built, if it's pretty."¹⁹ Ryder finds a talent for painting and learns to develop it and discovers a new sense of beauty:

I had pursued a love of architecture but, though in opinion I had made that easy leap, characteristic of my generation, from the puritanism of Ruskin to the puritanism of Roger Fry, my sentiments at heart were insular and mediaeval.²⁰

Sebastian Flyte introduces Ryder to a world where everything is informed by the religious beliefs of its

members.²¹ It is so completely their way of life that it is entirely taken for granted. Ryder is eccentric in showing curiosity about it. The novel's religious atmosphere almost entirely emerges from Ryder's conversations with the various members of the family on the subject. Apart from the religious interest, Sebastian gives Ryder a glimpse of other, less exalted pleasures -- wine and good food. He takes him to Venice to meet his father, Lord Marchmain -- who deserted Sebastian's mother -- and further expands his horizons. All this rescues Charles from what he calls the "cultural water-wheel" which is in tune with his feeling of "a hot spring of anarchy [which] rose from depths where there was no solid earth, and burst into the sunlight -- a rainbow in its cooling vapours -- with a power the rocks could not repress."²² Inevitably his cousin Jasper despairs of him. Charles Ryder has a self-knowledge lacking in any of Waugh's earlier protagonists.

Ryder's second year at Oxford is a much quieter affair. Anthony Blanche, the homosexual aesthete whose main delight is to shock the aristocratic hearties, has gone down. As Ryder puts it, he has "lost the sense of discovery which had infused the anarchy of [his] first year."²³ It is at this point that Ryder finally meets the Flyte family. He had briefly met Julia the previous summer: she

had treated him with contempt, albeit concealed. Sebastian has hitherto very carefully avoided the meeting; he is afraid his family will supplant him in Charles' friendship. Both of them require a great deal of each other, indeed one depends on the other. The pair of them are arrested for being drunk in charge of a car after a visit to a night club in London and in the ensuing events Ryder is absorbed by Lady Marchmain into the very family which Sebastian wishes to escape. Although her attempts to convert Ryder to Rome fail, she does succeed in driving a wedge between the two friends. Oxford is no longer an escape; since their escapade in London one of Lady Marchmain's hangers-on, Mr. Samgrass, a don, is always in their company, having stood sponsor for their good behaviour. Sebastian takes to drink and very rapidly degenerates. He feels Charles has deserted him, whereas in fact the opposite is true. The latter's attempts to defend and care for Sebastian are unsuccessful. The pair stand together "contra mundum".²⁴ Sebastian, being sent down and chaperoned by the useful don, Samgrass, becomes a complete alcoholic. Since Charles aids and abets Sebastian when they meet again over Christmas at Brideshead, he is politely but firmly rejected. The idyllic phase is over.

A door had shut, the low door in the wall I had sought and found in Oxford; open it now and I should find no enchanted garden.²⁵

Like Waugh himself, Ryder left Oxford without taking a degree and has spent some time studying painting in Paris. He now enters the waste land of his own life. His connection with the Flytes becomes very tenuous. On occasions he meets Julia, Sebastian's sister, with whom he has established some sort of rapport, and her husband Rex Mottram. When Lady Marchmain is on her deathbed, Julia dispatches Ryder to Tangier in order to persuade Sebastian to return, to leave his rather squalid home and the waif he has picked up, but he fails. If we see Sebastian at a low ebb, so do we see Ryder. These are the lean years over which Waugh passes rapidly.

Ten years later we meet a successful, at least outwardly so, Charles Ryder on board a transatlantic liner. In fact, the time has been barren. His first commission was to paint the Marchmain House in London before it was demolished. This series flows from his brush and comes alive. His later work has not satisfied him -- it has lacked inspiration. Like Tony Last, Ryder travels south to Latin America in the hope of re-capturing the vital spark but this fails. He cannot grasp the fullness, he is still "pretending to be whole."²⁶ While the critics praise him, he is forced to disagree and accept Anthony Blanche's judgement, quoted earlier, that charm has killed him. His

marriage to Celia Mulcaster, sister of an Oxford friend, has proved to be arid, lacking affection and respect. Their re-union after the American trip ends in tears, not of joy.

For nearly ten years . . . I was borne along a road outwardly full of change and incident, but never during that time, except sometimes in my painting -- and that at longer and longer intervals -- did I come alive as I had been during the time of my friendship with Sebastian.²⁷

The visit to the 'wastes' of Latin America is merely a visit to a physical realization of his life. But, unlike Tony Last, he returns.

On board the ship travels also Julia, Sebastian's sister. She too has been through the barren years; her marriage also has failed. Gradually they come together in a mood of mutual consolation and begin an affair. The two of them seek the love, which they have missed elsewhere, in each other. After two years, while each of them preserves a front so far as marriage is concerned, Julia insists they divorce their spouses and marry. "I want a day or two with you of real peace."²⁸ Unfortunately this is not to be. With his association with Julia, Ryder returns to the Catholic world of the Flytes. The eldest Flyte, Lord Brideshead, who is a rigid Catholic, indicates that his fiancée would not consent to be the guest of two people living in sin. Julia is a lapsed Catholic but this harsh statement brings her up short.

Sebastian set him on the road to self-fulfillment in Oxford, now it is realized. As Ryder returns to the mess, someone says "You're looking unusually cheerful today."³³ In the early days of his friendship with Sebastian, Ryder indicated that he had been converted to the Baroque, that while "he had made that easy leap, characteristic of my generation, from the puritanism of Ruskin to the puritanism of Roger Fry, my sentiments at heart were insular and mediaeval."³⁴ It is not until a great deal later that the "insular and mediaeval" sentiments were released in the direction of religion.

Charles Ryder has, as has been indicated, lived through a barren, waste land, period in his life where he lacked a basic sense of order and purpose. This is paralleled in the world of the novel. It is set in the late twenties and the thirties, that period admirably labelled by W.H. Auden as "the age of anxiety."³⁵ The novel is set within a framework of the Second World War, and is essentially a fictional spiritual autobiography. This enables Waugh to indicate a logical development of the decay of order both in the State and its members to the final catastrophe of war. (It should be remembered Vile Bodies ends with a total war.) Although Ryder does come home from Paris to help in the General Strike of 1926, the political world does not affect the main protagonists. Rex Mottram, Julia Flyte's husband, moves on the fringes of high political life and it is through snippets

of conversation with his cronies that Waugh suggests the undertones of political chaos. Rex has created a 'Brideshead Set' which seems in some ways to reflect the Astor's Cliveden Set. Through them we hear of the moral crisis arising out of the proposal of Edward VIII to marry Mrs. Simpson. To these people divorce is totally acceptable. Through their conversation one can see the crumbling political order of Europe exemplified in the Spanish Civil War and the growing German menace. Each urges the other to take 'a strong line', to have 'a showdown', but no one does. The Brideshead Set betray a lack of scruple and moral purpose. Their only interest is in money and comfort. The conversation ends "What about a rubber? How about a whisky? Which of you chaps will have a big cigar?"³⁶ The undertones of war are heightened towards the end of the book. It is this that prompts Julia's initial wish to marry Ryder in order that she may have some peace before the destruction. The sense of crisis is increased by the Prologue and Epilogue. The war takes Ryder to a barren military camp outside Glasgow -- appropriately next door to a lunatic asylum whose inmates had "given up the unequal struggle, all doubts resolved, all duty done."³⁷ At the end, Brideshead is being used as a military headquarters which manifests its usual destructive tendency. It is in war that

the waste land reaches its apotheosis. Rex Mottram at last achieves the political success which has evaded him. The empty people can only achieve their greatest success in a time of disorder.

Everything was being got ready for the coming 'emergency'. No one in that dark office spoke the word 'war'; it was taboo; we should be called for if there was an 'emergency' -- not in case of strife, an act of human will; nothing so clear and simple as wrath or retribution; an emergency; something coming out of the waters, a monster with sightless face and thrashing tail thrown up from the depths.³⁸

There are three figures who may be said to personify the waste land -- Mottram, Hooper and Lady Celia Ryder. Mottram is the figure to whom Waugh devotes most attention. The particular reason for this is that Mottram wishes to marry Julia and join the Roman Catholic church. It is in this context that Waugh indicates the basis for her remark towards the end of the book that "Rex isn't anyone at all, he just doesn't exist."³⁹ Rex Mottram is a politician from Canada who is seeking success. In an aristocratic family like that of the Flytes, he can only seem incongruous because his values are so different and distorted. He is a success in that world where business and smart society unite. He joins the Roman Catholic church, not out of any conviction but merely because it is a convenience. He wants the glamour of a full church wedding. It is in this that the basic emptiness of Rex Mottram appears. In his instruction before

being received, the catechist has to treat him as an idiot-child. He cannot see any possible cause for objection by the church to his having been married and divorced before. Similarly, later he is surprised when Julia is hurt because he keeps a mistress. But in fact he is not a real person, as Julia realized after a year. He lacks some vital spark:

He simply wasn't all there. He wasn't a complete human being at all. He was a tiny bit of one unnaturally developed; something in a bottle, an organ kept alive in a laboratory. I thought he was a sort of primitive savage, but he was something absolutely modern and up-to-date that only this ghastly age could produce. A tiny bit of a man pretending to be the whole.⁴⁰

Rex Mottram is a product of the waste land world. A barren world will scarcely be creative.

At another level, Hooper, the inefficient officer, who appears in the Prologue and Epilogue, is similarly a waste land figure. Hooper is simply inadequate, lacking any spark of vitality or interest. He lacks the Romantic urge which Ryder finds so important. This is less his fault than that of his education. History in his childhood was merely "a profusion of detail about humane legislation and recent industrial change."⁴¹ No one has kindled Hooper's imagination about chivalrous battles or with poetry. Ryder sees him as a symbol of young England. People lacking order and purpose, they are even unable to supervise a job properly. Worse than that, there is nothing to show the existence of

a soul -- at bottom there seems to be no 'soul', no appreciation of beauty -- Hooper cannot see any of the ordered beauty for which Brideshead Castle stands. Hooper's lack of colour and inadequacy is less his own fault than that of his upbringing. He is the product of the waste land environment created by the disordered and purposeless world which has few spiritual values.

The third waste land figure is Lady Celia Ryder, Charles' wife. She is totally worldly and as much responsible as anything else for his lack of creativity. In some ways the trip to Latin America was an escape from her. She wishes to push Charles on to real success -- to develop his interests, but she has no comprehension of what art is. In turning an old barn into a studio, she may please the readers of Country Life but she destroys its real beauty. She organizes cocktail parties and tries to push Charles into films, but merely for the social and financial success which is so vital to her. Celia Ryder accuses Charles of always missing an opportunity to give pleasure, but in fact she herself has no real interest in pleasing anyone other than herself. She has been unfaithful to Charles and when the time comes to divorce him, she already has a successor. Celia Ryder is the product of the emptiness of

Mayfair which has provided the main theme of Waugh's earlier novels. Her self-centredness is born of a complete callousness but also of a society bereft of values. All these people have the same characteristic. They are not 'all there'. They are incomplete human beings.

Waugh has been accused of snobbery⁴² in his portrayal of Hooper and Mottram. This is an unfair accusation and scarcely based on sound evidence. Hooper is regarded with some affection by Ryder. The point is made quite clearly that it is society that is at fault for Hooper's colourlessness. No attempt has been made to treat him imaginatively, to offer any goal other than an aimless materialistic existence, living and partly living. Mottram, I have indicated, is shown at some length to be a sham. The attack of snobbishness is usually directed at Waugh's taste in brandy. He is accused of judging a man on his ability to judge a wine. This is absurd. The occasion referred to is a minor one and adds only to our picture of Mottram as the man wanting the glamour of a big society Catholic wedding, confusing the appearance with the reality. The charge of snobbery is an ill-founded one, usually based on an emotional response.

Contrasting with the unproductive world is the Catholic world to be found in the aristocratic Flytes and their country

house with its attendant chapel. It has already been observed how Waugh has been concerned with the aristocracy, not out of snobbishness, but because in them can be found an ideal of order based on a sound set of values. The early novels attack the aristocracy for its degeneracy into the 'Mayfair' set which is purely interested in the frivolous sating of sensation. If there is a section of society which has preserved a sense of balance and proportion, then the stability will spread. England's present aristocracy is a sham. In An Open Letter to the Hon^{ble} Mrs. Peter Rodd on a Very Serious Subject, Waugh points out that a very great many peers, who claim direct descent from the middle ages, are in fact being deceitful.⁴³ The aristocracy as an ideal of order, if it ever existed, flourished before the vulgarity of the Nineteenth century. There was to be found an order and the houses the aristocracy built reflected that sense of order. It is surely no accident that Waugh lived in Georgian manor-houses.

Brideshead Castle symbolizes the true order and the city of God. On Ryder at first, it only impresses its beauty. Where Hetton in A Handful of Dust stood for an imperfect order, an order which failed, the house was nineteenth-century Gothic revival. Here where the house stands for an old and well-established order, Brideshead is an

ancient house whose latest accretion is its art-nouveau chapel. The chapel is the centre of the household visited frequently and it is significant that when the family breaks up on the death of Lady Marchmain, the chapel is closed. Ryder, whose artistic talents are awakened by the house, becomes an architectural painter. In his Edmund Campion Waugh expresses the spiritual decay he feels has been brought about by the Reformation in terms of buildings:

The scars of the Tudor revolution were still fresh and livid; the great houses of the new ruling class were building, and in sharp contrast to their magnificence stood the empty homesteads of the yeomen, evicted to make way for the "grey-faced sheep" or degraded to day-labour on what had once been their common land; the village churches were empty shells, their altars torn out and their ornaments defaced; while here and there throughout [Campion's] journey he passed as with a different heart he had often passed before, the buildings of the old monasteries, their roofs stripped of lead and their walls a quarry for the new contractors.⁴⁴

Thus Brideshead is Baroque -- the architecture of Catholic Italy. The London house of the Flytes, Marchmain house, has to be sold in order that the family may survive but even if retrenchment is necessary, the main house is not touched. Lord Brideshead returns to his old home to die but he also returns to the Roman church. At the end of the book, after the waste land years and in wartime, the chapel is re-opened, the lamp is relit. It symbolizes the essential triumph of the church and the return to its arms of all its

members. The castle has developed, a new house built out of old stones, and even if the desolation of our world washes against it, the castle still stands:

Something quite remote from anything the builders intended has come out of their work, and out of the fierce little human tragedy in which I played; something none of us thought about at the time; a small red flame -- a beaten-copper lamp of deplorable design relit before the beaten-copper doors of a tabernacle; the flame which the old knights saw from their tombs, which they saw put out; that flame burns again for other soldiers, far from home, farther in heart, than Acre or Jerusalem. It could not have been lit but for the builders and the tragedians, and there I found it this morning, burning anew among the old stones.⁴⁵

Waugh peoples his Catholic world with the Flyte family, all of whom have a different approach to religion and none of whom may be said to be made especially happy or free from sin by their adherence to Catholicism. Indeed, Waugh indicates that membership of the church is difficult and often painful. Great demands are made which are neither easy nor pleasant to fulfill. The point Waugh makes is that a rule of order is provided which involves both spiritual and physical worlds and while it may not bring happiness on earth, it will in after life. As Christopher Hollis puts it:

The challenge of Brideshead Revisited is the challenge, fairly thrown down, of Augustine's Two Cities. It is not that all are virtuous within the City of God, but simply that there alone is man's home, that there alone can man be truly man.⁴⁶

Charles Ryder is the typical product of the Arnoldian public school whose religious impulses are stunted and who emerge as agnostics:

I had no religion. I was taken to church weekly as a child, and at school attended daily, but, as though in compensation from the time I went to my public school I was excused church in the holidays. The master who taught me Divinity told me that biblical texts were highly untrustworthy. They never suggested I should try to pray. My father did not go to church except on family occasions and then with derision. My mother, I think, was devout. It once seemed odd to me that she should have thought it her duty to leave my father and me and go off with an ambulance, to Servia, to die of exhaustion in the snow at Bosnia. But later I reconciled some such spirit in myself. Later too, I have come to accept claims which then in 1923, I never troubled to examine, and to accept the supernatural as the real. I was aware of such needs that summer at Brideshead.⁴⁷

Ryder is an average example of a man who has been taught to concentrate on the outer forms and has never realized the inner meaning. He shows a great disbelief and his inconclusive discussions with the Flyte family indicate this, but his final conversion comes about directly out of this association.

Sebastian Flyte is secure in his belief which, however, makes him confess "It's very difficult being a catholic."⁴⁸ Sebastian's mother makes a prison for him by means of her love. First by way of drink and then by flight, he escapes. Sebastian, however, does not degenerate totally, despite the fact that he becomes a dipsomaniac. When Ryder visits him in a Tangier Hospital, Sebastian gives him what Ryder calls

"the key I lacked"⁴⁹, although he does not indicate what to. Sebastian has taken in a degenerate German boy whom he looks after. He says of this: "It's rather a pleasant change when all your life you've had people looking after you, to have someone to look after yourself. Only of course it has to be someone pretty hopeless to need looking after by me."⁵⁰ Later, after his German friend has hung himself in one of Hitler's concentration camps and after wandering around Europe at the lowest level of Society, Sebastian returns to Morocco. He still preserves his capacity to take and return love. The people in the hotel where he stayed in the Arab quarter of Carthage talk of him as a "good man".⁵¹ He seeks to become a lay brother in a monastery and serve as a missionary in a primitive African village. Finally, Sebastian is accepted as an under-porter in the monastery -- half in the world and half out of it. Cordelia, the youngest Flyte sister who has visited him, points out that Sebastian has a certain quality of holiness. The church has room for all and Sebastian with all his faults is accepted. No matter what he has been through, he has found himself. Cordelia places the traditional religious emphasis on the value of suffering. Sebastian will achieve holiness through pain:

One can have no idea what the suffering may be, to be maimed as he is -- no dignity, no power of will. No one is holy without suffering. It's taken that form with him . . . I've seen so much suffering in the last few years; there's so much coming for everyone. It's the spring of love.⁵²

To Sebastian's sister Julia, the church is initially a barrier against what she wants. As a debutante, her religion cuts her off from the sort of marriage she wants to make with, say, the eldest son of one of the nobility. Moreover, "if she apostatized now, having been brought up in the church, she would go to hell, while the Protestant girls of her acquaintance schooled in happy ignorance could marry eldest sons."⁵³ Julia is cut off in a sense from society. Later she wishes to be allowed to sleep with Rex Mottram in order to prevent him from returning to his lover, Mrs. Champion.

'Surely, Father, it can't be wrong to commit a small sin myself in order to keep him from a much worse one.' But the gentle old Jesuit was unyielding. She barely listened to him. He was refusing her what she wanted, that was all she needed to know.⁵⁴

Julia refuses to make her confession and "from that moment she shut her mind against her religion."⁵⁵ She marries Rex, who is a divorcé, in an Anglican church. But by doing as she pleases, she does not achieve happiness. On the contrary, she enters a barren, unproductive period. Symbolically, her baby is still-born. Many years later when her elder brother, Brideshead, indicates that she and Charles are living in sin, she is brought up short. She meditates on the destructiveness and alienation of sin; on the way her sin killed her mother:

'Mummy dying with it; Christ dying with it, nailed hand and foot; hanging over the bed in the night-nursery; hanging year after year in the dark little study at Farm Street with the shining oil-cloth; hanging in the dark church where only the old charwoman raises the dust and one candle burns; hanging at noon, high above the crowds and the soldiers; no comfort except a sponge of vinegar and the kind words of a thief; hanging forever; never the cool sepulchre and the grave clothes spread on the stone slab, never the oil and spices in the dark cave; always the midday sun and the dice clicking for the seamless coat.

'No way back; the gates barred; all the saints and angels posted along the walls. Thrown away, scrapped, rotting down; the old man with lupus and the forked stick who limps out at nightfall to turn the rubbish, hoping for something to put in his sack, something marketable, turns away with disgust.⁵⁶

A sense of guilt for her sins builds up in Julia and in the end, after her father dies, she announces she cannot marry Charles Ryder. She must return to God and make some sort of atonement.

I've always been bad. Probably I shall be bad again, punished again. But the worse I am the more I need God. I can't shut myself out from His mercy. That is what it would mean; starting a life with you without Him. One can only hope to see one step ahead. But I saw today there was one thing unforgiveable . . . The bad thing I was on the point of doing, that I'm not quite bad enough to do; to set up a rival good to God's . . . it may be a private bargain between me and God, that if I give up this one thing I want so much, however bad I am, he won't quite despair of me in the end.⁵⁷

It is a measure of Ryder's new belief that he understands Julia's feeling. If she is to save her soul she must abandon the pleasures of the moment and concentrate on something more lasting. Julia at least achieves an

internal harmony and returns to an ordered way of life. But sacrifice is demanded since there is only one truth.

By contrast with the lapsed members of the church, we are presented with three very faithful people, Brideshead, Cordelia, and her mother, Lady Marchmain. Brideshead accepts everything totally without querying. He had wanted to become a Jesuit but had been dissuaded. He has never done anything with his life, performing all his duties with punctiliousness but never giving or taking love, always remaining detached. Cordelia we meet as a child. She always preserved her faith and hoped to become a nun. However, as she did not prove to have a vocation, she went out to Spain in the Spanish Civil War on the Franco side as an ambulance driver, and later stayed on. She has found a sense of fulfillment in service. At first Ryder thinks Cordelia is thwarted, later he realizes his error. Cordelia has an inner harmony, a sense of the spiritual order he himself lacks.

Lady Marchmain is a very complex figure. She drives away her husband and son and alienates Julia, yet she is represented as a very pious woman. Anthony Blanche represents her as a destructive "Reinhardt nun"⁵⁸ who drains Adrian Porson, one of the greatest poets of the time, of all creative energy. Lady Marchmain is a totally possessive

woman who is also possessive in her religion. She has immense faith and devotion, which impells Cordelia to say of her: "I sometimes think that when people wanted to hate God they hated Mummy."⁵⁹ Cara, Lord Marchmain's mistress, maintains that she is a "good and simple woman who has been loved in the wrong way;"⁶⁰ Lord Marchmain had not grown up and so grew to hate her. Lady Marchmain is a person who despite her religion is bitterly unhappy. The point surely is that the church will hold everyone and that it does not bring an easy answer, a solution to all problems.

Lord Marchmain comes home to die. After twenty years in Italy, he returns not only physically to Brideshead but to all that Brideshead epitomizes. Lord Marchmain accepts the last sacraments before he dies. Waugh sets this in a lavish manner. Lord Marchmain comes to die in a drawing room designed in the Chinese Chippendale style in a vast elaborate four-poster bed. It is a last gesture of grandeur. All the family return to the arms of the church and Ryder who had at first resisted is drawn in too. The last book is entitled 'A Twitch upon the Thread', a phrase taken from that other Catholic apologist, G.K. Chesterton, in one of his Father Brown stories which Lady Marchmain read the first night Sebastian got drunk at home:

I caught him [a thief] with an unseen and an invisible line which is long enough to let him wander to the ends of the world and still to bring him back with a twitch upon the thread.⁶¹

Brideshead Revisited is totally different from anything else Waugh had written before. The old sense of detachment is replaced by a sense of commitment. Here Waugh puts forward the necessity for a sense of order and harmony and points out how barren and empty are the lives of his waste land figures. Waugh demonstrates the need for a religion. In this sense, Brideshead Revisited could be said to be a work of apologetics. Although the religion he supplies is Roman Catholicism the work cannot be called an apology for Catholicism since Waugh does not attempt to justify one specific sect but merely to show the need for religion. In an article written in 1946, he indicates his vital concern with man as a religious animal:

I believe that you can only leave God out by making your characters pure abstractions. Countless admirable writers, perhaps some of the best in the world succeed in this. Henry James was the last of them. The failure of modern novelists since and including James Joyce is one of presumption and exorbitance. They are not content with the artificial figures which hitherto passed so gracefully as men and women. They try to represent the whole human mind and soul yet omit its determining character -- that of being God's creature with a defined purpose.

So in my future books there will be two things to make them unpopular: a preoccupation with style and the attempt to represent man more fully, which to me means only one thing, man in his relation to God.⁶²

This is Waugh's object in Brideshead Revisited. Each of his characters react to God in a different way, some deny him but each in the end is welcomed in the church. Waugh is not concerned with outward forms, man in relation to man, or with the creation of an ideal politico-social order. Huxley has shown us in Brave New World how sterile that can be. Waugh is concerned with the inner life and the sense of harmony and creativity that it can have. He has said that "I believe man is, by nature, an exile and will never be self-sufficient or complete on this earth."⁶³ Man is naturally sinful and merely by belonging to the church will not become good. The Flytes are not made specially good or happy by their Catholicism. Sebastian is on the surface a drunken wreck but the church is less concerned with his worldly success than his spiritual success when it triumphs. Indeed in some ways religion causes unhappiness. A sacrifice may be called for as Julia has to give up Charles. The church gives man the chance to realize his fullest potentiality, to become his true self. The point Waugh makes is that Catholicism is absolute truth and the ultimate reality. Hetton Abbey failed because its basis of Anglicanism was false. Brideshead, on the other hand, is a symbol of the Holy City; in the same way as all return to it so all return to the arms of the church. The authority must be accepted. The lamp is relit in the chapel.

CHAPTER VI

SWORD OF HONOUR

(Included: The Loved One and Helena)

In Brideshead Revisited, Waugh sets up a tension between a private, inner Catholic world and contemporary civilization. The early novels depicted a waste land; with The Loved One, he takes up the theme again and depicts a spiritual desert which does, however, have religious overtones lacking in the earlier treatment of the same topic. The novel indicates a concern not for the individual and his redemption but for a society. It is interesting that Waugh should choose Hollywood and California as a setting for this novel. There is no doubt that he was acutely conscious of the colossal influence of the United States over the world at large -- he wrote in 1949, the year after the publication of The Loved One, that

The peoples of other continents look to America half in hope and half in alarm. They see that their own future is inextricably involved with it and their judgment is based on what they see in the cinema, what they read in the popular magazines, what they hear from the loudest advertizer. Gratitude for the enormous material benefits received is tempered with distaste for what they believe is the spiritual poverty of the benefactor.¹

In this particular article Waugh does go on to qualify this statement but there is no doubt that in The Loved One he

does aim to show us a "spiritual poverty". At the heart of the film industry, the great propagandiser of "Americanism", there is a spiritual desert. All values are inverted and the only way out is self-destruction.

The Loved One is a novelistic realization of a discussion of Forest Lawn Park which Waugh published in 1947 under the title "Half in Love with Easeful Death". It is apparent from this factual account that he had no need to create a fantasy world to make his point: the real thing was fantastic enough. In his article, Waugh emphasizes the lack of real religious values in the sentimental mummary of Forest Lawn:

Forest Lawn has consciously turned its back on 'the old customs of death', the grim traditional alternatives of Heaven and Hell, and promises immediate eternal happiness for all its inmates. Similar claims are made for other holy places -- the Ganges, Debra Lebanos in Abyssinia and so on. Some of the simpler crusaders probably believed that they would go straight to heaven if they died in the Holy Land. But there is a catch in most of these dispensations, a sincere repentance, sometimes an arduous pilgrimage, sometimes a monastic rule in the closing years. Dr. Eaton is the first man to offer eternal salvation at an inclusive charge as part of his undertaking service.²

This is the ultimate end of the unreal life of the Californian film world. The lack of reality and permanence culminates in the grotesque euphemism for death which is Forest Lawn, or in the novel, Whispering Glades. The whole social structure depends on the film studios -- linked to an

artificial heart which generates no more than a few crude reactions -- and where the support of the studio is removed, as in Sir Francis Himsley's case, then suicide is all that remains. But suicide is not death; the dead man becomes the "Loved one" and those who mourn become the "Waiting ones". A genuine religious impulse is replaced by the sentimentalizing of Whispering Glades which soothes and is false. All the buildings are modelled on older English originals but at their core they are "Grade A steel and concrete"³; they are a sham. The real symbol of salvation, the cross, is taboo. The human need for pomp and ritual is satisfied by the whole apparatus of Whispering Glades with its high priest in the shape of the Chief embalmer, Mr. Joyboy, who -- a macabre touch, this -- woos his assistant by fixing radiant smiles on the corpses he prepares. Dennis Barlow, the protagonist of the book, finds, however, the embalmed body of Sir Francis Himsley "an obscene travesty."⁴

The people who inhabit this world are scarcely alive in the fullest sense. Dennis Barlow is in the Basil Seal tradition of the 'Happy Exploiter'. Joyboy is an ordinary figure outside the purlieus of his temple, surrounded by an ill-tempered mother and her pet parrot. Aimée Thanatogenos, the girl wooed by Joyboy and Barlow, stands apart from the rest of American women whom Waugh

found standardized from New York to San Francisco. Aimée is "sole Eve in a bustling hygienic Eden, this girl is a decadent."⁵ If Aimée is the standard product in brain and body, her spirit belongs to the "musky orchards of the Hesperides,"⁶ her ancestral Greece. But as her name indicates, she is of the race of death and is doomed to die.

Whispering Glades is parodied by Dennis Barlow's employer, the Happier Hunting Ground, which is a pet's version. It serves to show up the absurdities of Whispering Glades but the funeral service for dogs might serve equally well for the human race as pictured in this book:

Dog that is born of bitch hath but a short time to live and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down like a flower; he fleeth, as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay . . .⁷

Religious needs are supplied by non-sectarian clergymen who have answered some rather nebulous call and the Guru Brahmin. The latter, far from being an Eastern Ascetic, is a syndicate of two men who run the advice column of a newspaper. The one who handles Aimée's problem is fired for drunkenness but he offers her her destiny by suggesting that she commit suicide. She does.

Waugh paints an empty world, using a touch of fantasy while never departing very far from the truth. Destruction,

physical and spiritual, is inevitable in a world which takes Forest Lawn as its apotheosis. In former ages, Waugh points out, as at the time of the High Renaissance, there was usually a marble skeleton somewhere among the elaborate carvings of the tombs:

. . . often you found, gruesomely portrayed, the corpse half decayed with marble worms writhing in marble adipocere. These macabre achievements were done with a simple moral purpose -- to remind a highly civilized people that beauty was skin deep and pomp was mortal. In those realistic times Hell waited for the wicked and a long purgation for all but the saints, but Heaven, if at last attained was a place of perfect knowledge. In Forest Lawn, as the builder claims, these old values are reversed. The body does not decay; it lives on . . . The soul goes straight from the Slumber Room to Paradise, where it enjoys an endless infancy.⁸

Waugh made two other excursions into the crazy modern world -- Scott-King's Modern Europe and Love Among the Ruins. The former retails how a 'dim' schoolmaster, devotee of an equally dim seventeenth-century Latin poet, Bellorious, gets involved in central European politics. Scott-King is not unlike William Boot in that both want to be left alone but are caught up to serve the crazy purposes of the modern world. Love Among the Ruins is a pessimistic view of the future world. It continues Waugh's attack on progressive crankish reformers who in their attempts to alleviate man's lot only succeed in dehumanizing him and making life so boring that Euthanasia becomes the most popular social service. But Waugh's interests are mainly religious in his later years.

In 1950, two years after the publication of The Loved One, he issued his only historical novel, Helena. The novel is a life of St. Helena, making no pretensions to historical accuracy, covering her life from marriage to Constantius Chlorus to her discovery of the true cross on which Christ was crucified.

The book shows, amongst other things, the emergence of Christianity from the catacombs and persecution as the official religion of Constantine Rome. There are innumerable cults and superstitions; Tréves where Helena settles in middle age is something of a centre for cults of one kind or another. All these cults answer a crying need for religion: Constantius Chlorus, Helena's husband, in his youth required "no guide or prop on the road before him" but "in his own private, perpetual winter, he reverted to the occult aid offered him in his free youth," the aid of the cult of Mithras as a means of "subduing the cloying powers of darkness."⁹ Christianity begins to spread under official sanction after Constantine has his vision of the 'Chi Rho' sign at the Milvian Bridge and in that sign conquers. Helena, herself having been hitherto a hardened sceptic about all forms of religion, is baptized.

One of the major themes of Helena is the nature of power, or rather power without grace. The book is full of

political figures, Constantius, Maximian, Constantine and Fausta, who are struggling for supremacy. There is a pointless tyranny, under which murder, torture, and deceit flourish. Into this world, Christianity introduces the hope of order and grace:

But as the news spread everywhere in Christendom, from every altar a great wind of prayer gathered and mounted, lifted the whole squat, smoky dome of the Ancient World, swept it off and up like the thatch of a stable, and threw open the calm and brilliant prospect of measureless space.¹⁰

Waugh illustrates Lord Acton's tag "Absolute power corrupts absolutely." The Caesars are oblivious to the light which Christianity brings, and when they do accept it, their motives are more fashionable than spiritual. All the rulers display "Power without Grace" which leads to destruction because it is selfish and self-glorifying. Helena explains:

Sometimes I have a terrible dream of the future. Not now, but presently people may forget their loyalty to their kings and emperors and take power for themselves. Instead of letting one victim bear this frightful curse they will take it all on themselves, each one of them. Think of the misery of a whole world possessed of Power without Grace.¹¹

Pope Sylvester is an example of Power with Grace. He is dismissed as "a thoroughly holy, simple old man"¹² by Fausta, a man who refuses to join in the power politics of the Council of Nicea. Sylvester sees himself as an agent, he lacks self-concern and has the only true view of the nature of the Church: "The Church isn't a cult for a few heroes. It is for the whole of mankind."¹³

Helena has all her life been fascinated by Rome. It is, at this point, still the centre of the world, for Constantinople is not yet founded, and is thus always referred to as "The City." It stands for order and harmony. The Roman Empire is bounded by a wall -- outside all is jungle, inside is "peace, decency, the law, the altars of the Gods, industry, the arts, order."¹⁴ Helena is frustrated in her desire to see Rome until old age and significantly goes there shortly after her baptism. Her desire to see Rome is her desire to find Truth, for Rome symbolizes the Holy City, the see of Peter. Waugh does not romanticize Rome -- at present it is ugly and gross and not until after it has been pillaged and destroyed will beauty come.

Helena has always cut through sentimentality and myth to get at the facts. She questions closely the when and the where in an attempt to get through the mass of superstition and obscurity to the central truth. She asks her husband, Constantius, the essential questions about the Mithraic cult at its most central point:

And when did this happen? How do you know, if no one was there? And if the bull was the first thought of Ormazd and he had to be killed in order to make the earth, why did not Ormazd just think of the earth straight away? And if the earth is evil, why did Mithras kill the bull at all?¹⁵

She asks the same questions of the Gnostics and again receives no answer but an evasion. Lactantius, the Christian, is able,

however, to offer hard facts about Christ's birth, life and death. Helena is surprised and is firmly set on the path to conversion. But with the official sanction, Christianity becomes fashionable and the ladies of the court take up their favourite chaplains and favourite heresies because they have a certain attraction.

Constantine is afraid of being baptized because he is afraid of sinning and damning his eternal soul: none the less he surrounds himself with an empty ritual and an elaborate Labarum which he claims is the standard he carried into battle at the Milvian Bridge. Helena is sceptical and sees the truth in danger of being corrupted: "It's all a game of words."¹⁶ In order to prevent this, she sets off to find the True Cross, dismissing all mythical notions that it is made of all species of wood or certain special woods as "Rot". She finds the Cross and puts an end to the philosophic disputations surrounding the new faith by turning:

The eyes of the world back to the planks of wood on which their salvation hung.

This was Helena's achievement, and for us who, whatever our difficulties, are no longer troubled by those particular philosophic confusions that clouded the fourth century, it has the refreshing quality that we cannot hope to imitate it. The cross is very plain for us today; plainer perhaps than for many centuries. What we can learn from Helena is something about the workings of God; that He wants a different thing from each of us, laborious or easy, conspicuous or quite private, but something which only we can do and for which we were each created.¹⁷

Waugh published in 1965 the trilogy Sword of Honour which is a recension of his three war novels, Men at Arms (1952), Officers and Gentlemen (1955), and Unconditional Surrender. He admits his aim in the introduction to Sword of Honour as being to describe the Second World War as it was experienced by one man and to show its effect on him. In Brideshead Revisited, Waugh has taken up his religious position and now he presents us with a development of it. The protagonist of Sword of Honour, Guy Crouchback, is a man fully inside the church yet one who has not found anything to generate any enthusiasm in his soul. The novel is in some ways the story of Guy's crusade for that fulfillment. Malcolm Bradbury has very neatly summed up the book as forming:

a remarkable war-novel, surely the most important novel about the Second World War to appear in England, and [which treats] ironically the notion of the just war, showing that war not as an epic action, but as a succession of absurd or ignominious episodes, cruel excesses, mistaken alliances. The main events are concerned with an historical happening, the War, to which the hero Guy Crouchback attempts to attach his destiny; and this hero, close to Waugh, undergoes an ordeal or search in which his own values are threatened and finally changed, and with whom the reader is involved in a complex relationship of sympathy and distrust.¹⁸

Guy Crouchback is the latest in Waugh's gallery of victim-heroes. He is a 'dim' man, the heir to an old recusant family, who was forced to divorce his wife. The result has been to cut him off and to dry him up. His divorce has made it difficult for him to be at ease with

his fellows -- not because they shun him but because it has destroyed his peace. He lives in Italy, in a family house, speaking Italian and as a practising Catholic yet he is not 'simpatico', he is a stranger among the Italians:

Into that waste land where his soul languished he need not, could not enter. He had no words to describe it. There were no words in any language. There was nothing to describe, merely a void. His was not 'an interesting case', he thought. No cosmic struggle raged in his soul. It was as though eight years back he had suffered a tiny stroke of paralysis; all his spiritual faculties were just perceptibly impaired. He was 'handicapped' as Mrs. Garry of the Villa Datura would have put it. There was nothing to say about it.¹⁹

Guy is thus a "dry empty place."²⁰ This is manifested in such ways as his inability to say 'here's how' over a drink in the early part of the book; he can "only manage an embarrassed grunt."²¹ He has no sense of brotherhood, even within the church.

The Crouchback family are an old family, never having apostatized at the reformation or since. At the beginning of the novel it seems as though the family is doomed to extinction. The eldest son went straight from Downside into the army and was killed by a sniper on his first day in France during the First World War. There is an ominous note of madness -- the second son, Ivo, barricaded himself in his lodgings, starved himself to death and died stark mad. There is a sister, Angela Box-Bender, who has married a

politician; her son, taken prisoner at Calais, becomes a monk after the war. Guy, the youngest, is, as we have seen, incapacitated by his divorce and after his happiness is shattered hides away in Italy. The family house -- Broome, having been held in uninterrupted male succession since Henry I -- seems unlikely to have an heir. The old estates have been reduced to the park and the home farm; however, the house is not sold but leased to a convent. Broome, while everpresent in the background, does not have the overriding significance of Hetton or Brideshead, but it does still stand as a citadel and through it a note of hope is sounded: "The Sanctuary lamp still burned at Broome as of old."²²

Guy's father is an ideal figure, who is wholly admirable, a good person and standing in contradiction to Guy, who is "possessed of nothing save a few dry grains of faith."²³ Mr. Crouchback is always referred to as an absolute standard. He lives according to the right sense of values and in his unassuming modest fashion realizes his full potential. He acts in his tolerance and humility as a mentor to Guy whose crusade is a struggle to become like his father, to water his religious and emotional aridity. Father and son are contrasting. Neither has had what might be called worldly success but the father has a benevolence not to be found in the son:

He was an innocent, affable old man who had somehow preserved his good humour -- much more than that, a mysterious and a tranquil joy -- throughout a life which to all observation had been overloaded with misfortune. He had like many another been born in full sunlight and lived to see night fall . . .

He had a further natural advantage over Guy; he was fortified by a memory which kept only the good things and rejected the ill. Despite his sorrows, he had had a fair share of joys, and these were ever fresh and accessible in Mr. Crouchback's mind. He never mourned the loss of Broome. He still inhabited it as he had known it in bright boyhood and in early, requited love.²⁴

To Guy Crouchback, the Russo-German pact^{see} brought a deep peace. The enemy is seen as a simple, clear-cut force of evil which must be destroyed. Communism and Nazism, the two totalitarian political systems, are by that alliance seen as being one and the same. A simple way was offered Guy, the black and white choice between good and evil. The war with Germany is a battle for justice, a battle against the corruptions of the modern world:

But now, splendidly, everything had become clear. The enemy at last was in plain view, huge and hateful, all disguise cast off. It was the Modern Age in arms. Whatever the outcome, there was a place for him in that battle.²⁵

Guy Crouchback starts out, therefore, under an illusion, seeing himself as battling for the old order and, even more, seeing himself through this struggle as restored to his fellow men, no longer "set apart from his fellows by his own deep wound, that unstaunched, internal draining away of life and love."²⁶ In order to support himself in this

battle, Guy creates a personal, romantic myth. The Italian town, where he is living at the beginning of the book, shelters the bones of an English crusader, Sir Roger de Waybroke, who significantly died before he actually reached the Holy Land. In true Romantic fashion, Guy takes the Knight as his exemplar even though he died with his vow unfulfilled and dedicates himself on Sir Roger's Sword. In the war, Guy sees clearly to begin with, therefore, a distinction between right and wrong, good and evil. It is his duty in the chivalric fashion to enter the lists to defend justice and the faith.

Throughout the book, there are certain people and institutions who have a symbolic value as bastions against the waste land. One of the most important of these is the Royal Corps of Halberdiers, a regiment of great tradition which stands for past greatness and glory and in which Guy Crouchback takes enormous pride. He has had great difficulty in joining the army in the first place and it is, significantly, only through an officer whom he meets with his father, that he is accepted as a temporary officer in the regiment. This is the beginning of a love affair with the army which ripens into marriage and although he is to be greatly disillusioned, Guy's love for the Halberdiers is never quite lost. He creates a myth, a romance, when the war starts, but by the

end of the war that myth has undergone very considerable modification. The regimental training satisfies a deep need of Guy's. It bolsters his Romantic myth that he is a modern crusader fighting for justice and faith. The formalities and traditions of the mess with the port and the snuff mull are a delight to him. "He loved the oil-painting over the fireplace of the unbroken square of Halberdiers in the desert. He loved the whole corps deeply and tenderly."²⁷ The setting apart is ended, he can say "Here's how" over a drink without embarrassment. Here also are presented two figures who mean a great deal to Guy as personifications of the good values. Ben Ritchie-Hook, the brigadier, owes more to his forerunner of Peter Pan than his look. The brigadier is a farcical figure, an enfant terrible, a lover of blood and gunpowder who believes all warfare is directed at "biffing" the enemy. Apthorpe, another clown, is also a sympathetic, almost sublime figure, with his mass of equipment and delusions of grandeur. Both figures are larger than life and, since neither is appropriate to a less heroic age, both are killed.

From this high point at the beginning of the book a progressive deflation of Guy sets in. The second phase of training takes place in Kut-al-Imara House, a requisitioned school which is uncomfortable and depressing. The training

undergone there is boring and so unsatisfactory that the whole process has to be repeated.

The occupation of this husk of a house, perhaps, was a microcosm of that new world he had enlisted to defeat. Something quite worthless, a poor parody of civilization, had been driven out; he and his fellows had moved in, bringing the new world with them; the world that was taking firm shape everywhere all about him, bounded by barbed wire and reeking of carbolic.²⁸

Guy's illusions are beginning to be shattered so that he feels that the wasteland world is more firmly entrenched, and, still worse, he is fighting on its behalf. He feels that he is fighting "a war in which courage and a just cause were quite irrelevant to the issue."²⁹ When his training is complete, he finds he is only appointed a platoon commander. This sense of failure is paralleled on the greater front by the Norwegian débacle and the Russian conquest of Finland. This is heightened by the fall of France and is made more personal in that his nephew Tony Box-Bender is taken prisoner at Calais. With the alternation of alert and counter alert, the regiment fails to act as a consolation to Guy's disillusionment.

Finally the regiment sets out for Africa only to find when they get there that the operation for which they have been training has been cancelled. Enraged at being deprived of a chance to "biff" the enemy, Ritchie-Hook sends

a small group ashore at Dakar under Guy's leadership. Unfortunately the whole affair turns into a fiasco, and is complicated by the fact that Ritchie-Hook surreptitiously joins the group. Through no fault of his own, Guy receives discredit for the affair and a black mark is permanently placed against him. Matters are further complicated by Apthorpe who is desperately ill in hospital. Guy visits him and on being advised by the Brigade Major that it is customary, though strictly against orders, he takes a bottle of whisky. Unfortunately, Apthorpe drinks all of it and kills himself. Guy again is unfairly loaded with the responsibility. He is the supreme victim. He is unable to be a success and to win a solid position in the army because his fate has made him the victim of circumstances; consequently through no fault of his own he suffers. This section, originally published as Men at Arms, ends with Guy discredited and disillusioned, at a nadir in his fortunes, and burdened with personal guilt for having contributed to the death of a friend.

As a result of the Dakar fiasco, Guy is posted back to England and so once more is cut off from his fellows. Even though the fates seem to militate against his ever being wholly absorbed into the Halberdiers, they still mean very much to him.

So Guy set out on another stage of his pilgrimage, which had begun at the tomb of Sir Roger. Now, as then, an act of pietas was required of him; a spirit was to be placated. Apthorpe's gear must be retrieved and delivered before Guy was free to follow his fortunes in the King's service.³⁰

Before Apthorpe died, Guy promised him he would dispose of his tropical gear to an old friend, 'Chatty' Corner. Guy collects the equipment but has difficulty in tracking down the recipient. Initially he is depressed and finds the "energizing wire between him and the army cut"³¹ so that he is rendered immobile.

However, the Halberdiers help him on his way.

"The classic pattern of army life . . . the vacuum, the spasm, the precipitation"³² carries Guy on a posting to the Isle of Mugg where he finds 'Chatty' Corner and hands over the gear. "It was a holy moment. Guy rose in silence and ritually received the book. The spirit of Apthorpe was placated."³³ Guy must abandon his apathy and lassitude and become involved with other people. His pilgrimage is, in a sense, one to find his place in the world, in relation to other people. He has hidden himself away and forgotten Donne's injunction that "No man is an island, entire of itself."³⁴ Guy's crusade is more than to revitalize Britain; it is also to revitalize himself.

Guy makes a new beginning. On Mugg he finds a congenial group of people who are all officers in a Commando

unit. The Commandos are another force upholding the ideal of order and whose officers are all gentlemen and thereby retain something of the symbolic values of the Halberdiers. Guy is whole-heartedly accepted and is able to entrench himself. He finds a fellowship among the Commandos so that he loses some of his sense of ineptitude. None the less as a result of Ritchie-Hook's skirmish at Dakar, Guy is not able to join the Commandos fully but remains in a sort of military limbo. On Mugg, Guy renews an old acquaintanceship with Ivor Claire, an aristocratic dandy with a reputation for show-jumping, who represents an ideal figure to Guy, that of a latter day Sir Roger de Waybroke. The two men come together and recognize a kinship, "a common aloofness . . . a common melancholy sense of humour."³⁵ "Ivor Claire was the fine flower of them all. He was quintessential England, the man Hitler had not taken into account."³⁶ The Commandos, however, are inappropriate to the modern waste land age with their code of values. They belong to the period which went out with Rupert Brooke. As Ian Kilbannock, an aristocratic Journalist of left wing tendencies, puts it:

This is a People's War and the people won't have poetry and they won't have flowers. Flowers stink. The upper classes are on the secret list. We want heroes of the People, to or for the People, by, with or from the People.³⁷

Kilbannock is an aristocrat who abandons his responsibilities as an order figure in order to join the new successful left-wing movement. He is disloyal to his values and traditions. He contrasts with the Commandos who stand for order over and against his corrupting modernism.

The Commando brigade never gets the chance to act. They find themselves in temporary camps in the Suez Canal area in most unmilitary disorder. Guy is more disillusioned and has "begun to dissociate himself from the army in matters of real concern."³⁸ In this disillusion with the army, Guy is remarkably like Charles Ryder of Brideshead Revisited. They show very similar reactions. The force takes part in the disastrous attack on Crete and proves totally inept in the ensuing disorder. Guy finds himself cheerfully absorbed by his men but there is no place for him in his old regiment. In a sense he is still isolated. The anarchy of the armed forces is bad enough but all Guy's hopes fail. The system of order represented by the Commandos proves inadequate. Guy's ideal crusader, Ivor Claire, questions the chivalric ideal of order and is finally to desert his men in order to save his skin. Guy manages to escape but at the cost of great suffering and a desire to remain out of the world. The clear cut cause of justice has been obscured. Ivor has proved to be an illusion and finally Guy's hopes of a latter day crusade against the infidel are

destroyed when Russia joins the Allies against Germany. There are no clear-cut issues.

The last section of Sword of Honour was first published under the title of Unconditional Surrender. It describes the last phase of the war as Guy Crouchback saw it. The just cause of going to war, the cause of right against wrong, has been destroyed in the new alliance of Russia and Britain. Unconditional Surrender is concerned with Guy's position in the new world which is beginning to emerge. "Personal honour alone remains."³⁹ A new period, that of the "People's War" foretold by Ian Kilbannock, now begins, with Ludovic as a typical figure -- the ranker become officer -- and with the Stalingrad Sword, a token of Anglo-Russian friendship, as its symbol. Again Guy is deprived of his chance to stay with his regiment and is shipped back to England for regimental duties.

Waugh adopts his usual flashback technique. Thus we are frequently taken back to Mr. Crouchback Senior at Matchet, where he is living a calm tranquil existence as a Preparatory Schoolmaster. On his return to England, Guy and his father discuss Mussolini's Lateran Treaty which the former thinks was a mistake: the Pope ought to be above all politicking, cut off from things temporal. Mr. Crouchback rebukes him, pointing out that this is not what

the church is for and again tells Guy that he has no right to be a soldier if he has no interest in victory. Guy Crouchback has reached a nadir, he is totally depressed. Shortly after this conversation, Mr. Crouchback writes to Guy making a vital point about the Church:

The Mystical Body doesn't strike attitudes and stand on its dignity. It accepts suffering and injustice. It is ready to forgive at the first hint of compunction.

When you spoke of the Lateran Treaty did you consider how many souls may have been reconciled and died at peace as the result of it? How many children may have been brought up in the faith who might have lived in ignorance? But quantitative judgements don't apply. If only one soul was saved that is full compensation for any amount of loss of face.⁴⁰

This is the lesson Guy has to learn. The point is made while he is being left in a sort of waste land as a member of the unemployed officers pool: "it was not for this that he had dedicated himself on the sword of Roger of Waybroke."⁴¹

We are now in the final stages of the war: Russia is pressing on Germany while British forces are caught in Italy and the Americans, typified by Lieutenant Padfield, are coming in on the act too. The rise of Ludovic, the classless man, not only as a soldier but as a writer published by the periodical Survival, is a sign of the times. It is plain that the left-wing elements are going to establish themselves in power after the war. As the book progresses, Waugh introduces a number of crypto-communists, of whom Kilbannock is one, who, recognizing the trend, profess the

appropriate views in order to establish themselves in the new order. Ludovic, an increasingly macabre figure, is shown with his mentor, Sir Ralph Brompton, a bogus intellectual homosexual, hoping and preparing to ride the communist wave of the future. These two, shortly to be joined by Gilpin and de Souza, anticipate the pro-Russian waste land that is to establish itself politically with the coming of peace and the election of a Labour Government. The aristocrats, meanwhile, are increasingly inadequate and cannot hope to occupy an important place in the coming post-war world. Ludovic's domination of the literary fashions presages his success in the desolate future. The triumph of the classless man over the old order is complete when, at the end of the book, Ludovic buys Guy's Italian castle and settles there.

Another portent of the coming post-war desolation is provided by Trimmer, one of the officers who joined the Halberdiers at the same time as Guy and who was subsequently found to be unsatisfactory. Ian Kilbannock, the aristocratic renegade, is Press Officer for the Hazardous Offensive Operations and for publicity purposes has skillfully exploited the public. Trimmer, a classless man like Ludovic, accidentally raids France instead of one of the Channel Islands and blows up a railway line.

Kilbannock makes him into a democratic People's Hero and as such he is the new Man of the Age. To boost morale in factories and large centres, Trimmer is sent on a tour of Britain because he is the type of person the waste land will idolize, not the genuine warrior-hero.

Trimmer becomes involved with Guy Crouchback's deflation through his former wife, Virginia. In civilian life Trimmer was a barber; he meets Virginia, who was one of his peace-time clients, in a Glasgow hotel. He falls deeply in love with her and, in order to keep up his morale, Ian Kilbannock encourages Trimmer and Virginia to have an affair, an affair which is totally displeasing to the latter. The liaison is ended when Trimmer is sent to America as a good-will Ambassador but not before Virginia is pregnant. Already depressed by her relationship with Trimmer, she is totally demoralized when she finds she has been divorced by her ^{current} husband, for now she has no source of income. No doctor will give her an abortion; in her face we see "the faint indelible signature of failure, degradation and despair."⁴² Virginia, the aristocrat, is ruined by the charlatan People's hero, Trimmer.

Guy has already made one act of pietas when he handed over Apthorpe's tropical gear to 'Chatty Corner'. He is now called on to make a second act of pietas by helping

Virginia. Initially Guy repulses her because his relationship with her is "limited". During his time at Kut-al-Imara, in a mood combined of depression and affection for his regiment, Guy had been encouraged to "believe that God's providence concerns itself with the propagation of the English Catholic aristocracy."⁴³ Prompted by this and by the fact that in the eyes of the Church he would not be committing adultery, he attempts to resume relations with Virginia. Not unnaturally she is insulted and humiliated; there is some basis for her deeply wounding accusation that Guy is a "wet, smug, obscene, pompous lunatic pig."⁴⁴ When, however, he learns she is about to have a child by Trimmer he forgets the limitation of their relationship by showing compassion and re-marrying her. This is the second of the three acts of pietas Guy is to make. He remembers his father's lesson: "Quantitative judgements don't apply. If only one soul was saved, that is full compensation for any amount of loss of 'face'."⁴⁵ We learn that, through this totally unselfish act of pietas "the deep old wound in Guy's heart and pride healed also."⁴⁶

As his final assignment in the waste land of war, Guy is sent to Yugoslavia as a member of a British Mission to the Communist partisan fighters. Here he makes his third and final act of pietas which marks the end of his spiritual withdrawal, of his spiritual paralysis. In Yugoslavia he

meets a group of Jews who are left uncared for and unwanted by the partisan government 'of the people, for the people, by the people'. His compassion is aroused once again, although initially he tells them it is none of his business. He struggles, despite many obstacles, to do something for them even though the Partisans are most hostile, and eventually secures their departure from Yugoslavia to build a new life.⁴⁷ This third act of pietas marks a new vitality in Guy which brings with it a compassion, a sympathy and responsibility for others. With the ending of his spiritual aridity, he comes out of hiding and takes his place in the world. His father's lesson went home: preserving 'face' is irrelevant.

Ludovic's novel, which he finishes during this section of Sword of Honour, is entitled The Death Wish. It is appropriate for one of the major themes of this section is the manifestation of a 'death wish' in a number of people. Both Virginia and Guy exhibit this desire to die. The latter's progressive deflation throughout the war so reduces him that when confronted by the corrupting socialism of the Yugoslavs and the British Mission, he can see no hope for the modern world and in the depression induced by lack of purpose confesses to a priest a wish to die -- a wish which Guy calls "presumption" since "I am not fit to die."⁴⁸ Ben Ritchie-Hook, Guy's early hero, now on

the shelf, comes out to Yugoslavia to watch a demonstration against an enemy fort by the Partisans. He also seems to have a wish to die, since inaction has reduced him to a parody of his former self. In the demonstration Ritchie-Hook runs right into the guns of the enemy -- it is almost suicide. As his confessor had said to Guy, "to wish to die is quite usual today. It may even be a very good disposition."⁴⁹

Mr. Crouchback also dies, without of course any 'death wish', and Waugh movingly describes his funeral -- of which the keynote is a simple dignity. Mr. Crouchback has been the standard, the exemplar to Guy, the "only entirely good man he has ever known."⁵⁰ His father had long been worried about Guy's apathy. His attitude to God of "I don't ask anything from you"⁵¹ has been fatal because it has dried him up and emptied him. It is at his father's funeral that he realizes he has a part in the Divine Plan and that he must ask. As we have seen, the opportunity to do "some small service which only he could perform"⁵² is offered and by taking it he is regenerated. The 'death wish' is only temporarily held by Guy; he does not give way to a sense of total despair.

The title of the last part of the war trilogy is Unconditional Surrender. Guy is called on to surrender

himself to God and to the modern world. His romantic myth of personal honour and a just cause has been destroyed. The desertion of Ivor Claire and the joining of Russia against the Germans force Guy Crouchback to come to terms with himself within an alien world. The old ideal of the aristocrat is finished, partly because the modern world has no place for personal honour but also partly because the aristocrat has abandoned his responsibilities. The war is not a simple just cause, it is a muddle and the world which survives the war is as anarchical as that which went before, with no more concern for sound values. Guy is asked by one of the Jews he helped:

'Is there any place that is free from evil? It is too simple to say that only the Nazis wanted war. These communists wanted it too. It was the only way in which they could come to power. Many of my people wanted it too, to be revenged on the Germans, to hasten the creation of the national state. It seems to me there was a will to war, a death wish, everywhere. Even good men thought their private honour would be satisfied by war. They could assert their manhood by killing and being killed. They would accept hardships in recompense for having been selfish and lazy. Danger justified privilege. I knew Italians -- not very many perhaps -- who felt this. Were there none in England?' 'God forgive me,' said Guy. 'I was one of them.'⁵⁵

Guy Crouchback loses his blindness, his illusions, and comes to terms with himself within the modern world -- the world he thought in 1939 he was attacking in^a just cause. After the war, Virginia having been killed by a flying bomb, Guy settles down with Trimmer's child and a second

wife in the Dower House at Broome. The Epilogue shows him accepted once again into the fellowship of the Halberdiers. We see a re-union in 1951 of the Commandos who trained on Mugg, to which, although not really a member of the group, Guy is invited as a simple matter of course and into which he fits with ease. He has achieved a measure of happiness -- as his brother-in-law says, "things have turned out very conveniently for Guy."⁵⁴ The traditional values decline, the world is still an anarchy and a disorder over which no overall control can be imposed.

The Roman Catholic Church, however, serves to offer a means of supplying an inner creative order. As at the end of Brideshead Revisited, Waugh does not offer Ryder's conversion as a means of achieving supreme happiness and contentment. Man may choose, in St. Augustine's terms, between the Earthly City and the City of God. The City of God does not bring any more than a spiritual renewal, a cure for the dry places. The waste land is barren; it is only through the church that it can be made productive. Guy Crouchback is himself an unproductive waste land at the beginning of the novel. The reader sees an education and renewal take place which culminates in a revitalization.

CHAPTER VII

WAUGH AND THE CRITICS

There is not a great deal of published criticism of the works of Evelyn Waugh. More especially, the majority of criticism concentrates on Waugh as a satirist rather than as a Catholic novelist. A further feature is that a disproportionate amount of attention is focussed on Brideshead Revisited so that a distorted view of Waugh's work as a whole is presented and an inadequate idea of the range of his development is gained. In addition, there has been little criticism published since the concluding section of the Crouchback trilogy, Unconditional Surrender, was issued in 1962. Few critics, therefore, have been able to examine Waugh's work in its entirety and to see the culmination of his Catholic attitudes. The excessive pre-occupation with Brideshead Revisited tends to mislead the student in that he does not always recognize the more complete Catholic statement of the war trilogy, Sword of Honour.

It does, however, seem useful for the sake of completeness to give some representative indication of the

critical opinion which touches on the particular aspect of Waugh's work which this study attempts to examine. There follows, therefore, a brief consideration of the more important and relevant criticism.

In 1958, F.J. Stopp published Evelyn Waugh: Portrait of an Artist which was the first book-length study, attempting to be as complete as possible. The book is something in the nature of a critical biography which devotes one section to a discussion of the life of the author and one section to a comment in general terms, besides a more detailed analysis of the novels themselves. Stopp attempts a Jungian analysis of Waugh's work. Thus, for example, he regards Apthorpe in Sword of Honour as being a double or a projection of Guy Crouchback; he sees certain of Waugh's characters such as Basil Seal and Julia Mottram as 'animus' and 'anima' figures. This being so, Stopp, while not ignoring the Catholic element, tends to give it less prominence. This is even true of Brideshead Revisited where little attention is paid to the last part of the novel so that the full significance of Lord Marchmain's return to the Church and Ryder's conversion is not realized. Certainly no attempt is made to consider Waugh's work as a pattern of the waste land world and as offering a way out of that waste land.

James Carens' The Satiric Art of Evelyn Waugh is, as the title suggests, primarily concerned with Waugh as a satirist. He does, however, examine the move to Catholicism and the quest for order but only in passing as it affects Waugh's satiric techniques and attitudes.

There are two useful introductory ~~studies~~ on the work of Waugh, Christopher Hollis's Evelyn Waugh and the similarly titled one by Malcolm Bradbury. The latter makes an overall survey of the writings which inevitably involves reference to the Catholicism. Bradbury does not, however, write with a particular thesis in mind with the result that his comments, though illuminating, are extremely general in nature. Christopher Hollis, on the other hand, despite the limitations imposed by fifty pages writes a summary of Waugh's career which places a great deal of emphasis on the Catholic aspects of Waugh. He suggests that the biography, Edmund Campion, marks a turning point whence Waugh went on to make "a conscious and deliberate use of his powers for a study of religious problems."¹ The pamphlet is inevitably too general in approach to do other than provide a brief introduction without much detail -- a job it does admirably.

A.A. De Vitis in his Roman Holiday examines the Catholicism of Evelyn Waugh through the early satires up to Officers and Gentlemen. He does not, however, regard

the satires as a specific delineation of a waste land world but more as comments on certain aspects of society. De Vitis does refer to the appearance of certain elements in the earlier novels which foreshadow the later Roman Catholic pre-occupation and he does recognise A Handful of Dust as the ultimate expression of the waste land. His discussion of the early novels is very general but the analysis of Brideshead Revisited is much fuller. De Vitis presents the novel as being principally a piece of apologetics and suggests that the religious considerations are dominated by the idea of one law for the rich and one for the poor. Written as the book was in 1958, De Vitis is unable to discuss the significance of Unconditional Surrender as the rounding off of Waugh's presentation of Catholic man in the modern world. He therefore is pleased to dismiss Officers and Gentlemen as unsuccessful with no religious interest at all.

There is a considerable body of periodical writing on Evelyn Waugh, of which only a small proportion is of any value to the serious critic. The greater part is little more than gossip, being more concerned with the man and his stated opinions than his novels, for Waugh, both by his reticence about himself and his unfashionable political and religious views, seems to have aroused a

considerable degree of curiosity. Of such comment, "Three Evocations of Evelyn Waugh" in Adam by three close friends, Anthony Powell, Harold Acton and John Sutro, are the most satisfactory, but, while they aid the understanding of the man, they give little new insight into the novels themselves. Another common form of periodical writing is the brief introductory survey of which Neville Braybrooke's "Evelyn Waugh" and the identically titled article by Rose Macauley are among the more valuable. Miss Macaulay is particularly interested in Edmund Campion.

Certain critics do recognize the development of a Catholic world order in Waugh, but fail to examine his work closely enough. W.J. Grace in "Evelyn Waugh as a Social Critic" recognizes that Waugh is writing about a disintegrating society concerned only with trivia. Grace comments on the lack of religious referent revealed by Waugh and his last section is devoted to a discussion of Brideshead Revisited which he sees as an indication of how a serious sense of reality could be put back into society. The article is unsatisfactory in a number of ways. Grace does not show a clearly defined line of development, partly because, since the article was written in 1949, nothing is considered after the publication of Brideshead Revisited. The analysis tends to be rather superficial,

especially of the earlier novels, and this superficiality leads the author to make one or two extreme statements: it is surely an exaggeration to refer to Lady Marchmain as a nymphomaniac.

Alvin B. Kernan in an article entitled "The Wall and the Jungle" writes an acute analysis of the early novels, following through the image of the wall, whether actual or immaterial. The wall, be it of stone or be it a "wall of culture", is shown to fail completely in its task of keeping back the jungle: "Waugh's world is, in short, one in which life and order are threatened constantly from within and without."² Kernan, also, sees that Waugh offers a solution to the problem -- the adoption of "some traditional pattern of belief and value".² He stops short, however, with A Handful of Dust.

Frank Kermode in "Mr. Waugh's Cities" covers the entire Roman Catholic aspect of Waugh. He traces Waugh's view of history as a decline since the English reformation which is seen as opening up the way for Hooper. He goes on to discuss the vision of the great houses of Britain as types of the Catholic city. Kermode regrets the intrusion of opinion into Brideshead Revisited, for he feels that it makes the tone less certain. In addition Kermode dislikes a number of characters -- he does not specify which -- whom he finds repulsive and who soil the book for

him. Moreover, he thinks that Waugh is wrong to have identified the enemy of civilization as Hooper since the real enemy is much more dangerous, much cleverer than Hooper. Is not Kermode in error here? Surely it is less Hooper himself that Waugh objects to than the world which produces him? In his final paragraph, Kermode expresses a distaste for Waugh's "historical intransigence" which identifies the aristocracy with the Catholic tradition and would seem to deny grace to the Hoopers of this world. Kermode's article is very general in scope, although it does concentrate on A Handful of Dust and Brideshead Revisited. It, therefore, lacks completeness as, despite the fact he wrote in 1960, he does not make any attempt to show the workings of what he calls the "historical intransigence"³ in the later novels.

Bernard Bergonzi takes up Kermode's analysis in "Evelyn Waugh's Gentlemen" and suggests that it is too simple, especially in view of the Sword of Honour trilogy. Bergonzi is critical of Brideshead Revisited, which is "an elaborate Proustian re-creation of time past for which his [Waugh's] talents were fundamentally ill-suited."⁴ This criticism is balanced by an approval of Helena and the Crouchback trilogy where a struggle between myth and "three dimensional reality" is carried through to its conclusion. Bergonzi, however, allows Waugh to develop

and he sees this development in the gentleman-hero of Ryder and Crouchback; the romantic ideal, the embodiment of the Gothic dream is no longer valid.

Waugh's Brideshead Revisited and the introduction of a religious note caused a great deal of hostile comment. Edmund Wilson's "The Splendours and Miseries of Evelyn Waugh" is an admirable example. In 1944, he read Waugh for the first time and was delighted; in 1946, when Brideshead Revisited was published, he attacked it vigorously. He accuses Waugh of writing romantic fantasy and of failing to convince. Wilson finds that the snobbery -- "shameless and rampant" -- is the only real religion in the book. He dislikes the religious atmosphere which causes him to call the novel a "catholic tract", failing to convey any religious experience at all. Wilson regrets the lack of detachment which he had enjoyed in the earlier book.⁵

A much more thorough and serious attack was delivered by Donat O'Donnell who, despite his own Catholicism, is worried by Waugh's. His main charge is one of snobbery but he is not always careful with his accusations. O'Donnell, for example, suggests that Black Mischief and Scoop are largely based on a sly appeal to the white man's sense of racial superiority. This surely is to miss the point; Waugh is commenting unfavourably on Western civilization.

He also misses much of Waugh's humour. To be concerned with the snobbishness of the treatment of Captain Grimes is to take Decline and Fall altogether too seriously. O'Donnell commenting on Waugh's veneration for the upper classes fails to take into account their significance as symbols of order. He goes on to suggest that Waugh's Catholicism is hardly separable from a class loyalty, that it is a private religion, dark and defeatist. The core of his article, therefore, is the statement: "In Mr. Waugh's theology, the love of money is not only the root of all evil, it is the preliminary form of the love of God."⁶ It is implied, we are told, that Lord Marchmain's soul is more valuable than that of Hooper. O'Donnell takes an extreme and not untypical position. The logic of the argument which culminated in the above statement is very questionable. Moreover, nowhere does Waugh indicate that Hooper's soul is less valuable. On the contrary, he shows a certain pity for him. The serious objection to O'Donnell's article, therefore, must be that it is full of generalizations for which very little supporting evidence is offered and that it shows an inadequate study of the text.

Sean O'Faolain in his The Vanishing Hero is also worried by the Catholicism of Brideshead Revisited. He is unable to see any peculiarly Catholic attitude struck by the

novel. Waugh fails, he argues, to indicate the specific quality of Catholicism because he has lost his sense of detachment. O'Faolain feels that because their faith fails to bring happiness to any of the Catholic characters in the book, Waugh has not indicated the nature of the Church's appeal. He does not understand that Waugh is less concerned with earthly values than something more eternal.

Such, therefore, is the consensus of critical opinion. Brideshead seems to provide a stumbling block. The majority of critics seem unwilling to allow Waugh any sort of development as a writer. Because his early novels are written with a sense of ironic detachment, the feeling runs, he is not to be allowed to move away from that technique. Sean O'Faolain would deny Waugh the right to hold opinions, and he is not alone in this attitude.

CONCLUSIONS

Both Brideshead Revisited and Sword of Honour end on a note of completion. Charles Ryder has had to give up any idea of marrying Julia but in compensation he has gained his religious faith. The waste land years when he was "pretending to be whole"¹ are over. Although his memories of the past, of what had been, and his thoughts of what might have been are shot through with melancholy, Ryder returns to the officers mess to be greeted with "You're looking unusually cheerful today."² Similarly Guy Crouchback moves out of the arid phase of his life to re-marriage with members of an old Catholic family and to farming. If retrenchment is necessary, nevertheless Broome still stands as a Catholic symbol and a Crouchback is once more living, if not in the old mansion house, at least on the estate. Guy is no longer trying to escape from either himself or old associations.

In Waugh's novels there is, thus, a pattern of development from the figure of Paul Pennyfeather to Guy Crouchback. All his protagonists are dim figures who do not fit into the modern world but, whereas the early figures are passive, always acted upon, the later figures, especially Ryder and Crouchback, are more positive and are required to

take some action of their own volition. The pattern is completed by the semi-autobiographical The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold. Pinfold is a middle-aged Catholic novelist, living a retired life in the country, who has withdrawn from the world, refusing to vote in parliamentary elections and acting the part of a "combination of eccentric don and testy colonel."³ Gilbert Pinfold is a powerful personality who is totally uncomfortable in the modern world yet manages to survive unbowed despite the fact that he is beset by a disconcerting series of hallucinations which take the form of a vicious attack on his personality and attitudes of life.

Waugh presents in his novels, as has been shown, the sense of unease and disquiet which is generated by the modern world where the social and political structure has grown impossibly complex. He shows the need for some informing faith which will not dehumanize man. William York Tindall in his Forces in Modern British Literature sums up the effects of the waste land:

Disenchantment and its effects, the cynical, the disgusting, and the grotesque, though products of the First World War, existed before it as products of science and bourgeois self-contemplation. With these effects came others, the comic, the ironic, and the fantastic, the last of which appears an attempt of the disenchanted to rediscover enchantment. Attitudes of disenchantment, found at their happiest in the work of Huxley and young Waugh, occur so abundantly that, like politics and religion they discover the times.⁴

Waugh's novels may thus be regarded as an examination of the modern world, reaching a climax in A Handful of Dust. The ordered traditional world of Tony Last and Hetton Abbey is disrupted by the intrusion of the corruption of the modern world so that Last is finally destroyed. The book maintains throughout an undertone of terror which is the natural emotion in the circumstances of the growing disruption of the 1930's. When Scott-King at the conclusion of Scott-King's Modern Europe is asked to teach a class which would prepare boys for the modern world, he replies:

'I think it would be very wicked indeed to do anything to fit a boy for the modern world.'
 'It's a short-sighted view, Scott-King.'
 'There, headmaster, with all respect, I differ from you profoundly. I think it the most long-sighted view it is possible to take.⁵

In the face of this situation, Waugh is possessed of a will to order. The tradition of stability and creativity has been symbolized by the appearance in most of Waugh's novels of the great house standing as a citadel, not always successfully, against the forces of corrupting modernism. From the emptiness of *Mayfair Society*, Waugh turned in his later novels to the presentation of a standard of truth which would impose order and a sense of purpose on the waste land. In Brideshead Revisited and Sword of Honour, Waugh introduced the Roman Catholic Church as a means of establishing a new order, a new meaning. Like T.S. Eliot,

he asserts the vitality and essentiality of the Christian faith which will bring about a re-awakening. In answer to an inquiry if there was a direct moral to Sword of Honour, Waugh replied:

Yes. I imply that there is a moral purpose, a chance of salvation, in every human life. Do you know the old protestant hymn which goes:

Once to every man and nation
Comes the moment to decide

Guy is offered this chance by making himself responsible for the upbringing of Trimmer's child, to see that he is not brought up by a dissolute mother.⁶

In his Catholic novels, Waugh thus attempts to show what can be achieved through the Church. He is writing towards a moral end, concerned about man, not in relation to society, but in relation to God. Guy Crouchback moves in this direction. He learns to ask of God and in so doing becomes spiritually renewed. Adam Symes is concerned about the lack of permanence in this world. In the later novels that permanence is supplied by the Church.

It is not within the scope of this thesis to attempt any evaluation of Waugh's Catholic attitudes. The aim is simply to present them as they are revealed by his work. One might, however, inquire whether Waugh demonstrates effectively that Catholicism per se is the answer to the futility of the waste land or whether he is simply arguing the need for Christianity. The Catholic works are not works

of apology; they are Waugh's indication of Divine Grace at work in the world. Guy puts it thus in a question to an army chaplain:

'Do you agree . . . that the Supernatural Order is not something added to the Natural Order, like music or painting, to make everyday life more tolerable? It is everyday life. The Supernatural is real; what we call 'real' is mere shadow, a passing fancy.'

FOOTNOTES

Introduction

¹Waugh, "Matter-of-Fact Mothers of the New Age," 7.

²Waugh, "Felix Culpa," 323.

³Waugh, When the Going Was Good, 10.

⁴Waugh, "Two Unquiet Lives," 356.

⁵Waugh, "Converted to Rome: Why It Happened to Me."

⁶Waugh, "Come Inside," 20. In this connection it should be noted that Waugh was very much opposed to any change in the Roman Catholic Church. He very forcibly expressed his objections to any major alterations, especially in the ritual of the Mass, in "The Same Again Please: A Layman's Hopes of the Vatican Council." In the Preface to Sword of Honour he writes that unwittingly: "I had written an obituary of the Roman Catholic Church in England as it had existed for many centuries."

⁷Waugh, "The American Epoch in the Roman Catholic Church," 135.

⁸Waugh, "Come Inside," 20.

⁹Waugh, When the Going Was Good, 126-127.

¹⁰Waugh, "Fanfare," 56.

¹¹Ibid., 60.

¹²O'Faolain, The Vanishing Hero.¹⁷

Chapter I -- Decline and Fall

¹Waugh, Decline and Fall, 16.

²Ibid., 13.

³Ibid., 14.

⁴Ibid., 14.

⁵Ibid., 24.

⁶Paul Pennyfeather's adventures as a schoolmaster are based on Waugh's own experiences which are retold in his autobiography, A Little Learning.

⁷Waugh, Decline and Fall, 28.

⁸Ibid., 29.

⁹Ibid., 33.

¹⁰Ibid., 40.

¹¹Ibid., 42.

¹²Ibid., 57-58.

¹³Ibid., 55-56.

¹⁴Ibid., 56.

¹⁵Ibid., 192.

¹⁶Ibid., 121.

¹⁷Ibid., 134.

¹⁸Ibid., 141.

¹⁹Ibid., 142.

²⁰Ibid., 150.

²¹Ibid., 163.

²²Ibid., 165.

²³Ibid., 185.

²⁴Ibid., 190.

²⁵Ibid., 191.

²⁶Ibid., 193.

²⁷Ibid., 221.

²⁸Ibid., 221.

²⁹Ibid., 233-234.

³⁰Ronald Firbank was the first to use this technique. In 1929, the year after the publication of Decline and Fall, Waugh wrote an appreciation of Firbank's work in an article entitled "Ronald Firbank".

³¹Waugh, Decline and Fall, 198.

³²Ibid., 243-244.

³³Ibid., 250.

Chapter II -- Vile Bodies

¹Waugh comments in the Preface, Vile Bodies, 7, that "I think I can claim that this was the first novel in which dialogue on the telephone plays a large part."

²Ibid., 44-45.

³Ibid., 8.

⁴Ibid., 204.

⁵Ibid., 190.

⁶Ibid., 123.

⁷Ibid., 37.

⁸Ibid., 123.

⁹Ibid., 126.

¹⁰Ibid., 51.

¹¹Ibid., 35.

¹²Ibid., 107.

¹³The invention by Adam Symes of the sculptor, Provna, is based on a real hoax perpetrated by Bryan Guinness and Brian Howard (the original of Anthony Blanche). They invented an artist called Bruno Hat and held a successful exhibition of what purported to be Hat's paintings though they were in fact painted by Howard. The exhibition was written up in Lady Eleanor Smith's gossip column in The Sunday Dispatch. See Balfour, Society Racket, 167-168.

¹⁴Waugh, Vile Bodies, 218.

¹⁵Ibid., 17.

¹⁶Ibid., 23.

¹⁷Ibid., 99.

¹⁸Ibid., 101.

¹⁹Ibid., 131-132.

²⁰Ibid., 133.

²¹Waugh writes in the introduction, page 7, that "the composition of Vile Bodies was interrupted by a sharp disturbance in my private life and was finished in a very different mood from that in which it was begun. The reader may, perhaps, notice the transition from gaiety to bitterness." The "sharp disturbance" to which he refers was caused by the desertion of Waugh by his first wife, Evelyn Gardner. Alec Waugh in My Brother Evelyn and Other Profiles, 192-193, suggests that this desertion left a permanent scar on his brother.

²²Waugh, Vile Bodies, 218.

²³Ibid., 208.

²⁴Ibid., 186.

Chapter III -- Black Mischief

¹Waugh, Black Mischief, 70-71.

²Ibid., 75.

³Ibid., 116.

⁴Ibid., 124.

⁵Ibid., 129-130.

⁶Ibid., 158.

⁷Ibid., 184.

⁸O'Faolain, The Vanishing Hero, 14.

⁹Waugh, When the Going Was Good, 135.

¹⁰Waugh, Black Mischief, 135, 167, 184.

¹¹Ibid., 37.

¹²Ibid., 83.

¹³Ibid., 51.

¹⁴Ibid., 210.

¹⁵Ibid., 67-68.

¹⁶Ibid., 29-30.

¹⁷Ibid., 150.

¹⁸Ibid., 144.

¹⁹Ibid., 183.

²⁰Ibid., 160.

²¹The same divided attitude is exhibited by Waugh in Waugh in Abyssinia. He criticises the Abyssinians strongly but when he meets an Abyssinian who is not corrupted but who adheres to the old way of life Waugh is respectful:

It had been more than a pleasant interlude; it had been a glimpse of the age-old, traditional order that still survived, gracious and sturdy, out of sight beyond the brass bands and bunting, the topees and humane humbug of Tafari's regime; of an order doomed to destruction.

Waugh, When the Going Was Good, 309.

²²Quoted in Stopp, Evelyn Waugh, 32.

Chapter IV -- A Handful of Dust

¹Eliot, The Waste Land, 27-30.

²Waugh, A Handful of Dust, 15.

³Ibid., 35.

⁴Ibid., 19. In Memories, 175, Sir Maurice Bowra makes an interesting comment on Waugh at Oxford:

He longed for the security of some home in which he could regain the blitheness and security of childhood, and for one deceived year of marriage he thought that he had found it. When the dream broke he still sought it. Despite his hard-boiled attitudes, he was incurably sentimental about this. He wanted warmth, children's games, children's talk, the enclosed universe of the nursery.

⁵Waugh, A Handful of Dust, 45.

⁶Ibid., 107.

⁷Ibid., 158.

⁸Ibid., 9.

⁹Ibid., 87.

¹⁰Ibid., 144.

¹¹Ibid., 94.

¹²Ibid., 198.

¹³Ibid., 94.

¹⁴Ibid., 102.

¹⁵Ibid., 107.

¹⁶Ibid., 55.

¹⁷Ibid., 66.

¹⁸Ibid., 65.

¹⁹It is interesting to note that T.S. Eliot in The Waste Land, 43, includes Madame Sosostriis who tells fortunes by means of the Tarot pack of cards as a symbol of the superstitious nonsense to which the inhabitants of the waste land turn for guidance.

²⁰Waugh, A Handful of Dust, 9.

²¹Ibid., 143.

²²This section is based on a visit Waugh paid to British Guiana in 1932 which he wrote up in the travel book, Ninety-Two Days. While in South America, he met the prototype of Mr. Todd -- an elderly rancher, Mr. Christie who was warned of Waugh's coming in a vision. Waugh, When the Going Was Good, 229-233.

²³Waugh, A Handful of Dust, 174.

²⁴Ibid., 184.

²⁵Ibid., 230.

²⁶Ibid., 234.

²⁷Ibid., 17.

²⁸Ibid., 18.

²⁹Ibid., 17.

³⁰Ibid., 68

³¹Ibid., 91.

³²Ibid., 253.

³³Kermode, "Mr. Waugh's Cities," 68.

³⁴Waugh, A Handful of Dust, 37.

³⁵Ibid., 133.

³⁶Ibid., 249.

³⁷Waugh wrote an alternative ending of the novel for an American magazine. In this, Last returns after a conventional cruise to a repentant Brenda. Cynically, Waugh makes Tony keep on the London flat unbeknown to his wife under a false name. Tony Last is corrupted too.

Chapter V -- Brideshead Revisited

¹Waugh, Put Out More Flags, 229.

²Ibid., Epigraph.

³Ibid., Dedicatory Letter.

⁴Ibid., 114.

⁵Ibid., 114.

⁶Ibid., 52.

⁷Ibid., 36.

⁸Ibid., 230.

⁹Ibid., 233.

¹⁰Ibid., Epigraph.

¹¹There is a pointer to the future Catholic pre-occupation of Waugh's novels in a short story, "Out of Depth", which he published in 1936 in Mr. Loveday's Little Outing but has not re-issued since. An American, Rip Van Winkle, and Alastair Trumpington, having got drunk at a dinner party, become involved with a fellow guest who is a black magician. Alastair is whisked back in time to the age of Ethelred the Unready while Rip, like a good American, chooses to be propelled forward to the twenty-fifth century. He finds that the English have reverted to savagery and that the jungle has advanced to cover what once was London. Britain has now become subject to a highly civilized race of negroes. When the latter visit on a trading mission, they take Rip away to their headquarters where he sees at last something recognisable:

And then later -- how much later he could not tell -- something that was new and yet ageless. The word 'Mission' painted on a board; a black man dressed as a Dominican friar . . . and a growing clearness. Rip knew that out of the strangeness, there had come into being something familiar; a shape in chaos. Something was being done. Something was being done that Rip knew; something that twenty-five centuries had not altered; of his own childhood which survived the age of the world. In a log-built church at the coast town he was squatting among a native congregation; some of them in cast-off uniforms; the women had shapeless convent-sewn frocks; all around him dishevelled white men where staring ahead with vague uncomprehending eyes, to the end of the room where two candles burned. The priest turned towards them his bland, black face.

'Ite, missa est.'

(p. 136)

When he regains consciousness, Rip immediately sends for a priest who tells him that the non-catholic Alastair Trumpington has also sent for him. The story is a very specific embodiment of Waugh's sense of the church as being always a "shape in chaos", as being an eternal agent of order amidst disorder. It indicates Waugh's strong sense of continuity of the Catholic tradition.

¹²Waugh, Brideshead Revisited, 36.

¹³*Ibid.*, 39-40.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁶Ibid., 301.

¹⁷Ibid., 83

¹⁸Ibid., 42.

¹⁹Ibid., 92.

²⁰Ibid., 94

²¹Ibid., 94. With reference to Waugh's choice of Baroque architecture for Brideshead, there is an illuminating note in his Ronald Knox, 114:

In Child's eyes only the baroque at its most luxuriant could express the assertion that the Church of England was not a survival of the second year of Edward VI but a living part of the Catholic Church of Italy, Spain and Latin America.

Waugh, of course, set aside the claims of the Church of England but there is no doubt that, like Child, he regarded Baroque architecture as particularly symbolizing the Catholic Church. John Bourke in his Baroque Churches of Central Europe, 49, has a useful note in this connection:

We must see the basic conception of the Baroque outlook, the conception not merely of order but of a divinely ordained order pervading and uniting earth and heaven. This notion of order and harmony based upon order was central. The harmony is preserved only as long as the order is observed . . . The earthly order was to be shown as a reflection, however faint, of the heavenly, so that men, by studying and reflecting upon the one, might be more easily led beyond it to a contemplation of the other.

²²Waugh, Brideshead Revisited, 54.

²³Ibid., 119.

²⁴Ibid., 161.

²⁵Ibid., 190.

²⁶Ibid., 254.

²⁷Ibid., 251.

²⁸Ibid., 307.

²⁹Ibid., 370.

³⁰Ibid., 371.

³¹Ibid., 373.

³²Ibid., 380.

³³Ibid., 381.

³⁴Ibid., 94.

³⁵The phrase is used as the title of a long poem.

³⁶Waugh, Brideshead Revisited, 324.

³⁷Ibid., 12.

³⁸Ibid., 363.

³⁹Ibid., 302.

⁴⁰Ibid., 223.

⁴¹Ibid., 17.

⁴²A typical example of this accusation is Wilson, 300.

⁴³Waugh, "An Open Letter to Hon^{ble} Mrs. Peter Rodd . . .", 13.

⁴⁴Waugh, Edmund Campion, 133.

⁴⁵Waugh, Brideshead Revisited, 380-381.

⁴⁶Hollis, Evelyn Waugh, 20.

⁴⁷Waugh, Brideshead Revisited, 98.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 98.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 239.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 240.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 335.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 348.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 203.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 211.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 211.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 317.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 373.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 65.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 245.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 116.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 245. The story referred to is Chesterton's "The Twelve True Fishers."

⁶²Waugh, "Fanfare", 56.

⁶³Waugh, Robbery under Law, 16.

Chapter VI -- Sword of Honour

¹Waugh, "American Epoch in the Roman Catholic Church," 152.

²Waugh, "Half in Love with Easeful Death," 247.

³Waugh, The Loved One., 34.

⁴Ibid., 65.

⁵Ibid., 45.

⁶Ibid., 117.

⁷Ibid., 105.

⁸Waugh, "Half in Love with Easeful Death," 248.

⁹Waugh, Helena, 93.

¹⁰Ibid., 139.

¹¹Ibid., 198.

¹²Ibid., 149.

¹³Ibid., 207.

¹⁴Ibid., 47.

¹⁵Ibid., 97.

¹⁶Ibid., 208.

¹⁷Waugh, Holy Places, 13.

¹⁸Bradbury, Evelyn Waugh, 106.

- ¹⁹Waugh, Sword of Honour, 17.
- ²⁰Ibid., 95.
- ²¹Ibid., 45.
- ²²Ibid., 22.
- ²³Ibid., 38.
- ²⁴Ibid., 30-40.
- ²⁵Ibid., 15.
- ²⁶Ibid., 14.
- ²⁷Ibid., 61.
- ²⁸Ibid., 105.
- ²⁹Ibid., 156.
- ³⁰Ibid., 279.
- ³¹Ibid., 302.
- ³²Ibid., 309.
- ³³Ibid., 324.
- ³⁴Donne, Complete Verse and Selected Prose, 538.
- ³⁵Waugh, Sword of Honour, 358.
- ³⁶Ibid., 386.
- ³⁷Ibid., 375.
- ³⁸Ibid., 395.

³⁹Waugh, Unconditional Surrender, 4.

⁴⁰Waugh, Sword of Honour, 546-547.

⁴¹Ibid., 549.

⁴²Ibid., 676.

⁴³Ibid., 135.

⁴⁴Ibid., 149.

⁴⁵Ibid., 546-547.

⁴⁶Ibid., 747.

⁴⁷In this connection, Guy comes into conflict with *the* crypto-Communist, Gilpin, who shows no compassion for the Jews since they are inconvenient to the Partisans. Gilpin gleefully tells Guy that the two in whom he was most interested "were tried by a People's Court. You may be sure justice was done." Guy can only just restrain himself from striking Gilpin at this point. Page 792.

⁴⁸Waugh, Sword of Honour, 718.

⁴⁹Ibid., 718.

⁵⁰Ibid., 602.

⁵¹Ibid., 603.

⁵²Ibid., 604.

⁵³Ibid., 788.

⁵⁴Ibid., 796.

Chapter VII -- Waugh and the Critics

- ¹Hollis, Evelyn Waugh, 11.
- ²Kernan, "The Wall and the Jungle", 204.
- ³Kermode, "Mr. Waugh's Cities", 64.
- ⁴Bergonzi, "Evelyn Waugh's Gentlemen", 30.
- ⁵Wilson, Classics and Commercials, 300.
- ⁶O'Donnell, "The Pieties of Evelyn Waugh", 407.

Conclusion

- ¹Waugh, Brideshead Revisited, 254.
- ²Ibid., 381.
- ³Waugh, The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold, 9.
- ⁴Tindall, Forces in Modern British Literature, 112.
- ⁵Waugh, Scott-King's Modern Europe, 88.
- ⁶Jebb, "The Art of Fiction XXX: Evelyn Waugh", 82.
- ⁷Waugh, Sword of Honour, 88.

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63-66, 71, 72, 74.
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Sebastian set him on the road to self-fulfillment in Oxford, now it is realized. As Ryder returns to the mess, someone says "You're looking unusually cheerful today."³³ In the early days of his friendship with Sebastian, Ryder indicated that he had been converted to the Baroque, that while "he had made that easy leap, characteristic of my generation, from the puritanism of Ruskin to the puritanism of Roger Fry, my sentiments at heart were insular and mediaeval."³⁴ It is not until a great deal later that the "insular and mediaeval" sentiments were released in the direction of religion.

Charles Ryder has, as has been indicated, lived through a barren, waste land, period in his life where he lacked a basic sense of order and purpose. This is paralleled in the world of the novel. It is set in the late twenties and the thirties, that period admirably labelled by W.H. Auden as "the age of anxiety."³⁵ The novel is set within a framework of the Second World War, and is essentially a fictional spiritual autobiography. This enables Waugh to indicate a logical development of the decay of order both in the State and its members to the final catastrophe of war. (It should be remembered Vile Bodies ends with a total war.) Although Ryder does come home from Paris to help in the General Strike of 1926, the political world does not affect the main protagonists. Rex Mottram, Julia Flyte's husband, moves on the fringes of high political life and it is through snippets

B29883